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FEB 21 1933

DRAMA

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AT HOME & ABROAD



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FEBRUARY MCMXXXIII

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DOUBLE NUMBER
INCLUDING
THE ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE VILLAGE
DRAMA SOCIETY

6d.

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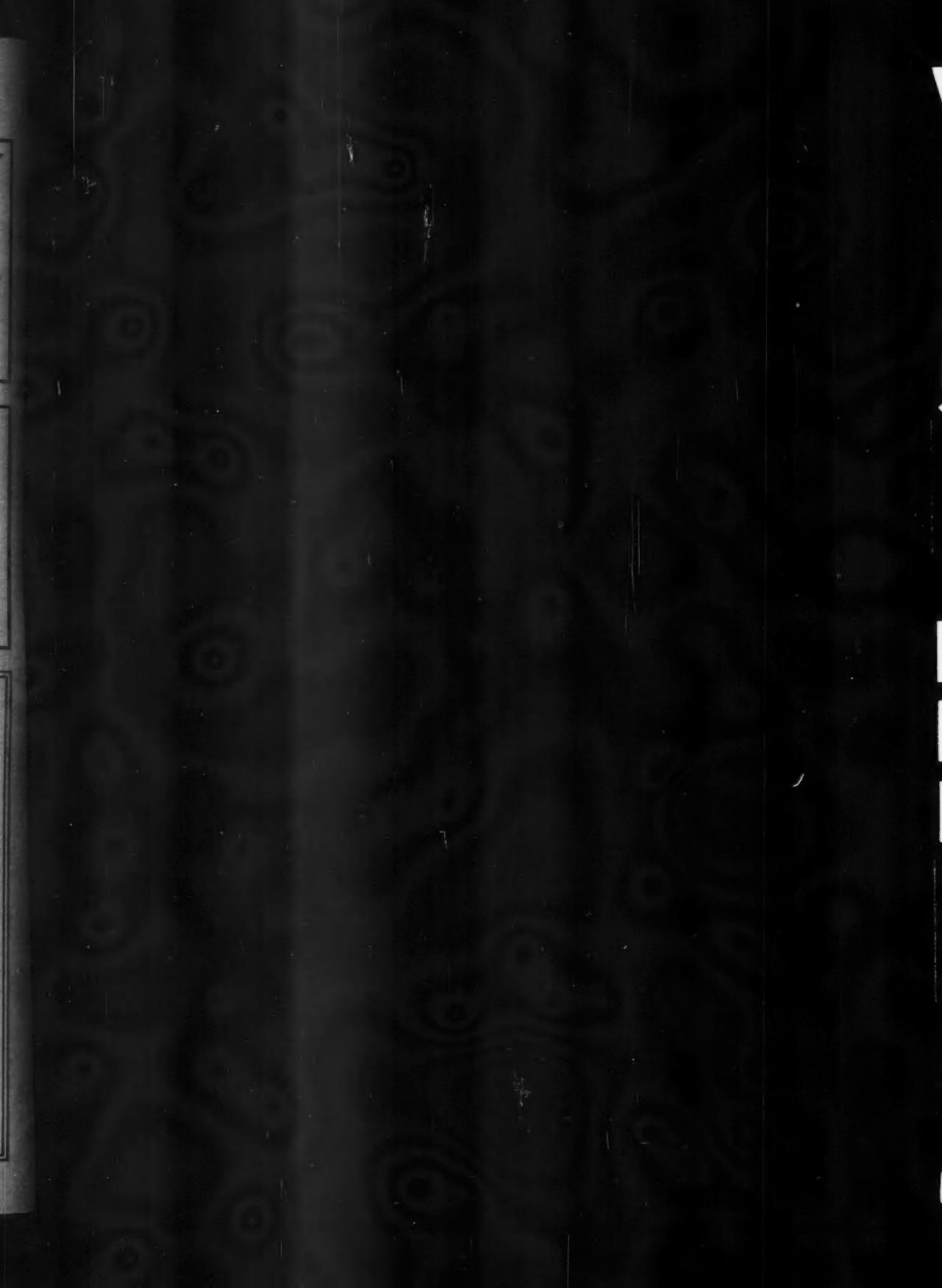
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DRAMA

VOL II

FEBRUARY MCMXXXIII

NUMBER 5

THE JOURNAL OF THE BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE

PLAYS OF THE MONTH

by Percy Allen

THIS month's plays are, I think, as a group, somewhat above the average, but I share in a widely felt regret, that several of the younger players interpreting them are vocally so toneless and flat.

"Dinner at Eight," provided by Mr. Cochran, with George S. Kaufman and Edna Forbes as author-cooks, is worth the eating, though slow in service. Miss Vanbrugh informs us promptly who are invited; but the curtain has been up a long while, before we know enough about the guests to be much interested in them. "Too episodic!" murmured some one behind me. Yet the authors knew what they were about; for the clues, at last, provided this drama of contrast between the tormented inner lives of guests-cum-host, and the surface insouciance of an opulent dinner-party, began to move with a tense and tragical swiftness. The long cast did well, with a play which, in purpose and method, recalls "Dangerous Corner."

When you see advertised a tragedy that has been prized by the Abbey Theatre, and is being acted by Sara Allgood, and the Irish players, a worth-while evening becomes certain; and so it is with Mr. Carroll's production of "Things That are Caesar's," at the Arts. Technically this drama of deadly strife, between a father on one side, and mother and priest on the other, for control of a daughter's soul and destiny, is imperfectly done; the duologues being too long, the themes too repetitive, and the words, occasionally, out of character; yet the play grips and holds. Its people are real Irish folk; and there is vital drama in this clash of wills between adversaries "savaged with hate." I have seen Mr. O'Rourke better cast; but all are good, especially Fred O'Dono-

van as a glib, smooth-tongued, foolish priest. Mr. Carroll's is an anti-clerical play; and its author an intellectual rebel.

Mr. Darlington's revision of Dion Boucicault's old melodrama, "The Streets of London," amplified by a dozen or so more-or-less contemporaneous ballads, amused and delighted me immensely. One is bound to laugh; for, to a modern audience—and modern audiences are cynical—so naive a picture of life will burlesque itself, even though the actors did not—as some of them did—deliberately exaggerate the exaggerated. For all that, there came, at moments, a lump in the throat, when the eternal human drama broke through the crust of contemporary convention; and when, to us who possess a Victorian past, there returned, after a silence of many decades, the refrain of some once familiar song. I endorse the hint on the programme, that "Streets of London" should be seen, both as an entertainment, and as comment upon a period puritanically shy of its theatre.

To those of us who, though romantical, are surfeited with triangle drama, "Double Harness" sounds an ominous note; and when I had realized that the first two acts were teasing me with glaring improbabilities, speculation doomed this comedy to the briefest of runs. Then, suddenly, the wind changed. A comic tea-party drew applause that was no longer merely polite, and the third act—by far the best—got us genuinely interested in a denouement that pleased and held the house. "Double Harness," if inefficiently principalled, would inevitably crash; but, for an exacting male lead, the management could hardly have chosen better than Mr. Owen Nares. We all

PLAYS OF THE MONTH

know his quality ; though we do not all know, any more than I did, that his opposite, Miss Mary Ellis, is an admirable actress—sincere, evocative, vital and swift. This pleasing couple, working up to a sound last act, should keep Mr. Montgomery's play in the Haymarket bill.

Mr. Novello, as dramatist, is quite capable of boring me in the theatre. He has done so already, more than once ; but at the Criterion I was amused. "Fresh Fields" never, for an instant, touches real life ; and earnest souls seeking veracity must stay away ; but if you are content with fictitious people contrived by a playwright who knows his world a little,

and his stage very much, you may be more than sufficiently entertained. This comedy's "fat" is mostly for the actresses ; and it is delightful to watch so accomplished a quartette as Misses Minnie Raynor, Ellis Jeffries, Lillian Braithwaite, and Martita Hunt. Miss Braithwaite has one of her most effective "dying-duck" parts ; and Miss Hunt reveals once more an intelligence and style that stamp her as an actress of quality. There are some long laughs in "Fresh Fields" ; and it will run.

"She Stoops to Conquer," at the Vic., was among their most successful recent productions ; in part, no doubt, because Goldsmith is much easier to play than Shakespeare.

THE GROWTH OF VILLAGE DRAMA

BEING A REPORT DRAWN UP BY THE BRITISH
DRAMA LEAGUE AT THE REQUEST OF
THE ADULT EDUCATION COMMITTEE
OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

VILLAGE Drama in the accepted sense is very largely a post-war development. It is true that sporadic examples occurred in pre-war days, such as the late Mr. Ambrose McEvoy's Village Company at Aldbourne, and the Grasmere Players founded by the late Canon Rawnsley. Other instances of the kind might, no doubt, be added, but there was nothing comparable to the "Movement" which has been so remarkable a phenomenon during the last twelve years.

The Village Drama Society was founded by Miss Mary Kelly in December, 1918, and the British Drama League by Mr. Geoffrey Whitworth in June, 1919, the former society having for its object the development of the drama in the villages alone, and the latter including village drama in its general work for the art of the theatre in Great Britain. In 1931 the Village Drama Society was incorporated with the British Drama League, to the great benefit of their common work.

The Society began by collecting and lending out a number of plays that could be acted in villages ; by starting a Costume Cupboard at philanthropic rates ; and by sending lecturers to bring the idea of

the drama before the villages. In those days the very word "drama" had to be explained to a rural audience, and the idea of acting was entirely new to any but the "gentry," and, except for a stray "sketch" acted by the families of the squire or parson here and there, village people had never seen any plays. But, the idea once put before the people of the country, the desire for this art flamed up everywhere, and now, after 15 years, the British Drama League has on its books over 10,000 names of villages practising it.

WOMEN'S INSTITUTES.

The interest of the Women's Institutes was early enlisted by constant correspondence with their members, by lectures and by a succession of articles supplied by the Village Drama Society for the Institute Magazine, "Home and Country." In 1920 the movement received a strong impetus when the Federation as a whole took it up, following an important speech by Lord Burnham which was delivered on behalf of the British Drama League at the Annual Meeting of the Federation held in London at the Caxton Hall. The inter-village and inter-county organisation of the F.W.I. made

THE GROWTH OF VILLAGE DRAMA

it possible to arrange lecture tours and county competitions, and drama committees were formed by the County Federations. The work done by the Women's Institutes has, in short, been invaluable. They have always moved steadily towards a higher standard of play and of production, and have taught the all-important lesson of team work among players and producers. The loyalty to the Women's Institute, which is now so strong a feature of village life, has saved the players from the petty quarrels and jealousies which are often a pitfall to amateur dramatic societies, and has helped them to put the play before themselves, as perhaps nothing else could have done.

In 1926 the National Federation of Women's Institutes passed a resolution at their Annual Meeting :

"That Women's Institutes are reminded that, while it is essential that they should maintain their own organizations and consider the needs of their own members in the first instance, they should also consider their responsibilities as part of the community and make the most of possibilities of co-operation with the men, in particular with regard to choral and dramatic societies."

This was a very important step, as it showed the artistic and educational limitations of "all-woman" drama were fully realised by the National Federation ; but unfortunately, it is not now always remembered in the counties, and many Women's Institutes are still keeping the drama strictly to their own members because they suppose that men may not be included in their plays. The effect of this is sometimes rather regrettable, for the men are beginning to say that acting is only a matter for women and children.

PLAYS.

During the pioneer years, the work at the Headquarters of the British Drama League and of the Village Drama Society grew very heavy, endless enquiries on every point of production were received, some of which entailed a good deal of research, while the demand for plays and costumes was so large that it was impossible to cope with the orders.

The Village Drama Society read and collected plays from all sources that were likely to be useful to the villages, and sent these out for reading to members and non-members. This meant that village producers were everywhere discovering that there were other subjects for the drama than the impertinences of mistress and maid, and the

improbable cases of mistaken identity, which, till then, had formed the whole content of most village plays. As a consequence there came about a new and considerable creation of plays of village life (a subject hitherto seldom touched by the dramatist). The Village Drama Society gave free criticism of these plays for ten years, and then started a Playwriting Competition in order to give a further stimulus to the authors. Messrs. H. F. W. Deane and Sons undertook the publication of the best of these plays in a Village Drama Society Series, and adopted a new plan of a sliding scale of royalties, by which the fee was assessed on the size of the hall, etc. This series has supplied an urgent need for plays of ordinary country life, which can be understood by the most untrained audience, and given by producers without experience. It has, so far, brought forth no genius, but on the whole has shown an honest and sympathetic study of village life, good characterisation, and much of the shrewd, simple humour that country people enjoy.

From time to time Lists of Recommended Plays have been issued by both societies, and at the present moment a new issue is in preparation. But the actual circulation of the plays themselves is felt to be far more valuable than a list of synopses, since producers form the habit of reading the plays and making their judgment first-hand, rather than through someone else's pre-digested opinion. Village Societies affiliated to the British Drama League have the benefit of access to the League Library which contains, besides a special Village Drama Section, a collection of plays and books on all aspects of theatre art amounting to over 25,000 volumes.

ACTING FEES.

Through the constant representations of the British Drama League and the Village Drama Society, the difficulties of small amateur groups who desire to do good modern drama are being more generally realised, and many authors are making special concessions to meet them. Deane's sliding scale has also materially affected the villages. The League of British Dramatists and Messrs. Samuel French have lately made still further concessions for play-readings. A pamphlet giving the present position with regard to fees, and directions as to the correct procedure, can be had from the office of the British Drama League.

THE GROWTH OF VILLAGE DRAMA

COSTUMES.

The two societies, now amalgamated, have always encouraged the making of costumes by any band of players, since this gives so great a scope for artistic development. At 8, Adelphi Terrace there is a large collection of books on costume, and sketches for different plays, and special research work is undertaken where necessary. But many players, having no premises in which to make or store costumes, could not attempt to form a wardrobe, and so the need for a central supply was felt by members. The Village Drama Society Costume Cupboard began with about 30 costumes, which were hired by the week to village players at 2s. a dress. Fortunately the Society had few expenses in its first six years, as it occupied ample premises, free of charge, over the stable at Kelly : also the whole of the work was done voluntarily, otherwise it could not have grown as it did. Gifts of material, old dresses, etc., were all used, and materials were home-dyed, so that a further stock was got together without very much cost, and when the headquarters moved to London the Cupboard was quite considerable. In 1927 the Village Drama Society received a grant of £575 from the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust for the Costume Cupboard. With this a larger stock was acquired, and the whole business put into good working condition. From time to time it has been found necessary to raise the rate of hire, in order to put the work on a sound economic basis, but it is still very moderate.

The Cupboard—now known as the Costume Department—has been used to its utmost limit by villages, schools, etc., but by this time many village dramatic societies have accumulated a stock of costumes for themselves, and the town players are coming to it in increasing numbers. The collection of costumes is too large to house at Adelphi Terrace, and remains at the old premises of the Village Drama Society, 274, New Cross Road, S.E. 14.

COUNTY COMMITTEES.

The formation of County Committees has always been an integral part of the policy of the Village Drama Society, since these have more power to give artistic expression to the individualities of the counties, and to quicken local interest and sympathy than any central committee. The policy was adopted by the British Drama League on its amalgamation with the Village Drama Society, and committees

now exist in Devon, Essex and Shropshire, while others are under consideration. Where a Rural Community Council has been formed in any county, the work is usually carried out by its own Drama Committee, and most of these Committees are now affiliated to the League.

County Committee work usually consists in the organisation of a Drama Festival, open to all kinds of players, and making special provision for beginners,—of the arrangement of weekly classes or short schools for producers and players,—and of a system of exchange of productions and of costumes, properties, etc. And the visits of advisers to the villages provide that personal interest that means so much to the isolated producer and players. The County Committees, in short, give as much help to their villages as they can, and at the same time link them with the wider aspects of National Drama through the parent society, the British Drama League.

THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

The Board of Education have from the first seen the educational value of this work to the countryside and have helped it in many ways. In the report "Drama in Adult Education," published in 1926, the matter was examined carefully from different angles, and some conclusions arrived at which have been justified by the event. The Drama Schools have always been given free advertisement in the Syllabus of Vacation Courses issued for teachers, and the County Education Authorities are recognizing the work of the County Committees of the League, and helping in the local organisation of Schools. For instance, the Cumberland Education Committee is now helping to organise a meeting to consider the formation of a County Committee, and the Hampshire Education Committee in the arrangement of a Summer School to be held there by the British Drama League in the coming summer.

DRAMA FESTIVALS.

Village Drama Festivals were started by the Women's Institutes in the form of Shakespeare Competitions, the first being held by West Kent, and the second (in 1923), by Dorset. These multiplied, until now almost every Federation has its Drama Competition; a Drama Festival was organised by the National Federation of Women's Institutes in 1928, and another is in preparation for 1933. When the Rural Community Councils and the County

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THE GROWTH OF VILLAGE DRAMA

Committees of the League were formed, they joined with the Women's Institutes in organising County Drama Festivals, to include mixed bands and junior players as well as the women. These Festivals, many of which are now linked with the British Drama League Community Theatre Festival, have done much to raise the standard of production and of acting, and have taught both players and audiences a great deal about plays in general. They have brought forward in every county fine and sincere work which has helped to establish the position of village players in the eyes of those who were inclined to be supercilious, and has shown disheartened beginners what results could be attained with players akin to their own.

PAGEANTS.

The Pageant, either of the county history or of that of the village, is a form of drama that is very popular in the country. It is, in reality, based on the countryman's love of his home, and awakens enthusiasm in people who are quite uninterested in the ordinary stage play. The players move about and speak in natural surroundings, very often on horseback and in large crowds, and feel none of the constraint that the tiny village stages impose on them. The pageant is essentially drama of the community, since it demands crowds of performers; and the common study of history, music and dancing, and the work on the costumes, properties, etc., have a great educational value.

TOURING COMPANIES.

From time to time small professional travelling companies have toured the villages, and have been able to provide a type of drama that the local players could not have attempted, and to show them something of what the standard of professional acting means. The Arts League of Service (one of several professional organisations affiliated to the British Drama League), was the pioneer in this work, and the impression left by their imaginative and finished performances will not easily wear off. The Elizabeth Blake Players successfully introduced the plays of Bernard Shaw to Somerset and Dorset, and the Road Players have toured many counties with an excellent programme of one-act plays.

SCHOOLS.

In 1926 the Village Drama Society made a new venture by holding a School for Producers

at Citizen House, Bath. Soon the British Drama also entered the field, and Producers' Schools of varying lengths are now held all over the country in constant succession. At the Central Schools organised by the League the elementary principles of dramatic art are taught, and more advanced methods of production are also put before students of greater experience. The fact that these Schools are intended to help the players and audiences in the villages, through their producers, is never lost sight of, and every effort is made to encourage wider enterprise in those who attend them. Forty Schools in all have been held by the two Societies, and requests for others are being constantly received from all parts of the country. Meanwhile local Bodies are beginning to organise smaller schools for their immediate neighbourhoods, which are thus reaching a special clientèle which the larger schools are not always able to attract.

THE CARNEGIE TRUST AND VILLAGE DRAMA.

Besides giving a special Grant to the British Drama League to enable its Community Theatre Festival to be brought within the scope of many of the smaller Village Companies, and besides the subsidy given, as already mentioned, to the Village Drama Society's Costume Cupboard, the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust offered, in 1927, a grant to a Joint Committee of the National Federation of Women's Institutes and of the National Society for Social Service, for the purpose of giving financial support to lectures, courses and short Schools for play producers and musical conductors. This Committee has worked through the Rural Community Councils or County Committees, and has proved a valuable ally to the Drama League by emphasizing the need for a careful choice of instructors, and by bringing the teaching close home to the village producer and player. Bursaries are also offered to those who wish to attend the longer Schools organised by the British Drama League.

BRITISH THEATRICAL LOAN EXHIBITION.

An important exhibition under the above title will open on Thursday, February 23rd, at Dudley House, Park Lane, London. The period covered will be 1500—1900, and exhibits will include Pictures, Properties, Models, Books, and many rare personal relics. Members of the League are strongly recommended to attend this exhibition which is being held in aid of the Building Fund for the new Paddington Tuberculosis Dispensary.

VILLAGE PLAY-WRITING COMPETITION, 1932

REPORT OF THE ADJUDICATORS:

Mrs. Penelope Wheeler and Gordon Bottomley, Esq., LL.D.

IN presenting their Report on the ninth annual series of these Competitions, the adjudicators have to note a very considerable increase of entries over those of former years, and a marked lowering of standard both in effort and attainment. While welcoming an influx of new writers it is impossible not to remark upon the thoughtlessness with which many of them start out to attempt playwriting without apparently even visualising to themselves what a play looks like in black and white ; and, in addition, the decrease in the number of competitors who understand what qualities are useful and necessary in plays for country players and audiences is depressingly apparent. The dearth of writers who can conceive a dramatic action out of the range of their own experiences is, as usual, evident ; but the writers are almost as scarce who can do as much as is asked of any actor—put themselves imaginatively in the place of their characters. More promisingly, but not much more usefully, comes a class of writers who achieve an easy and natural dialogue style, sometimes even a beautiful and admirably witty one ; and yet cannot conceive or organise a shapely and harmonious dramatic action with good balance and climax. In this connection it is to be noted, also, that too many beginners, with some obvious gift for the work fall easily, into the trap of making a whole play a series of scarcely concealed duologues and do not seem to realise the value (both to the play and to their work in general) of learning how to introduce a third or a fourth character vitally into a scene. There are a number of such entrants this time who may become good playwrights if they can develop a greater curiosity into the technical possibilities of the craft ; but the general achievement this year would be secondary and unimpressive if it were not for the presence of a one-act serious play "Overflow," by Wissington (Miss Maysel Jenkinson), a work of singular and exceptional beauty that springs out of a deep knowledge of country life and gives a shapely and exquisite portrait of a girl-mystic that Words-

worth would have been willing to sign. Otherwise the adjudicators regret to have found so little that merits recognition, and that in some classes they have not even been able to make an award.

AWARDS.

CLASS I. TRANSLATION. First Prize,—"The Girl from Arles," by Farmeress. (Mrs. Dixon, Gincox House, Oxted, Surrey.)
Hon. Mention,—"The Wash Tub," by Diana. (Miss Joan Ellison, Houlgate House, Park Avenue, King's Lynn.)

CLASS IIa. ONE-ACT COMEDY. No Prize Awarded. Hon. Mention,—"Rags and Bones," by Puck. (Lady Harvey, Yew Tree Farm, Mayfield, Sussex), "War When It's Ovver," by Strike On. (F. A. Carter, 19, Fenay Bridge, Huddersfield).

CLASS IIb. (1) ONE-ACT SERIOUS PLAY, REALISTIC. First Prize,—"Overflow," by Wissington, (Miss Maysel Jenkinson, Backfields, Glemsford, Suffolk).

CLASS IIb. (2) ONE-ACT SERIOUS PLAY, ROMANTIC OR POETIC. No prize awarded. Hon. Mention,—"Mr. Mistle," by September, (Miss O. Popplewell, Beechlands, Holywell Road, Malvern Wells). "Sea Dreams," by Dromona, (G. H. Murphy, 29, Sunny Gardens, Hendon, N.W.4), "The Shoes of Brother Esau," by Scrip, (Miss E. U. Ouless, 12, Bryanston Square, W.1.).

CLASS IIc. ONE-ACT PLAY FOR WOMEN. First Prize,—"Saturday Sensation," by Suzanne, (Miss Jean de Fraine, Feltham, Loughton, Essex). Hon. Mention,—"Mother Superior," by Sylvia, (Miss Janet Ling, 81, Albert Hall Mansions, S.W.7.), "Sweethearts and Steakpies," by Wallflower, (Mrs. Thompson, Elmcroft, Westergate, Chichester), "Plague of Studley," by Wissington, (Miss Maysel Jenkinson).

CLASS III. FULL-LENGTH PLAY. No prize awarded. Hon. Mention,—"Square Peg," by Senga, (Miss Agnes Johnson, 30, Tamworth Road, Newcastle-on-Tyne).

CLASS IV. THRILLER FOR MEN. No prize awarded.

In Class I. (translations from any European Language) a prize is given to "The Girl from Arles," by Farmeress, (Mrs. Dixon). This sympathetically and agreeably done version of Daudet's "L'Arlesienne" is a competent performance in every way, and a welcome picture of rustic life in France. A minor classic, in

PLAY-WRITING COMPETITION

its own country, and doubly acceptable on account of Bizet's incidental music, this play has never had full recognition in Britain; but it has attractive qualities of setting and story, and a translation as well done as this should be useful in many quarters. This play is also recommended for publication if the copyright can be arranged. An Honourable Mention is given to "The Wash tub," by Diana, (Miss Joan Ellison), an agreeable specimen of rudimentary medieval farce, with plenty of life and fun in it yet, to make it useful for schools and other young beginners. This version deserves praise also for attempting to reproduce the verse-pattern of the original, as the play would have distinctly less point without it; but a good many awkwardnesses in it need removing, and it cannot be recommended for publication unless the verse-craft is improved. A translation of "Maitre Pathelin," "Master Peter Smirk—Lawyer," by Minnow (Miss M. N. Waller) has some merit and deserves a word of commendation: but this fairly adequate attempt cannot be recommended for publication in view of other versions already available.

In Class II. (a) One-act Comedy for Village Players, two plays receive Honourable Mention. "Rags and Bones," by Puck (Lady Harvey), a promising play, shewing a real gift for farce-writing, energy and vitality. The writer has not sufficient restraint, and is sometimes too easily satisfied; and the play deserves a better finish.

"War When it's Ovver," by Strike On, (F. A. Carter) is an excellent dialect play of contemporary problems, with real originality and insight, giving at the same time excellent acting opportunities of not too difficult a kind. It is recommended for publication. Beside these "The Sheep-Track," by Trefoil (Spencer Frankland) may be mentioned for a charming idea: and "Boanless Kippers," by Millas (Mrs. Miller) for its interesting dialogue. Another entry in this class, "For Sale," by X, may be mentioned as the typical complete representative of too many plays in this competition, containing every fault of the tyro—inability to characterise, to conceive vocal and idiosyncratic dialogue, to avoid the stringing of sequential dialogue, to make the play move forward and gather to a crisis, to get away from the repetition of a single situation. In addition, this play is evidently written down to the supposed needs of the villages—and in doing this a complete lack of understanding of villagers is shown.

No prize is given in this Class.

In Class II. (b 1) One-act serious (realistic) play, "Overflow" by Wissington, (Miss Maysel Jenkinson), receives a prize and is recommended for publication. This play deserves to be signalled as the most beautiful and promising play entered in this year's competitions, and the only one that can be called fine. It is a play of remarkable intuitions, and of deft and accomplished writing. It calls for unusual acting but should not be beyond the sincerity and imagination found not infrequently among young village women. Before letting it go to press the writer is advised to prune the inversions that sometimes hamper the dialogue where the straight speech would be simpler and more poetic. In this Class may be mentioned also "Neighbours," by Onlooker, (Lady Harvey), for a good and promising beginning that does not fulfil the promise owing to lack of skill in handling: "The Brethren," by The Pome Man (John T. Kirk) as a really imaginative

realisation of the life of Christ's family, written graciously but not dramatically: and "In the Circumstances," by Mary Briton (Miss Ivy P. Morgan), for some good dialogue and an excellent closing situation—but its real problem is evaded, and it is unsuitable for village work.

In Class II. (b 2) One-act serious (romantic or poetic) play, "Mr. Mistle," by September (Miss O. Popplewell), receives an Honourable Mention. Gay and cheerful and picturesque, it has possibilities of performance of a kind much needed, and yields welcome increase of scope for amateur acting—the verse in which it is written being well done in its own way, and in a manner that should help sensitive amateurs to execute it properly: it cannot however be recommended for publication without much cutting and compression, it is at present too leisurely and unwieldy. "Sea Dreams," by Dromona (G. H. Murphy), receives an Honourable Mention. It is a very slight piece that is written with charm and distinction; and is so well invented that it is worth working on further to develop its original and gracious potentialities as a dance-mime. If it were carried further on such lines it could be recommended for publication. "The Shoes of Brother Esau," by Scrip (Miss E. U. Ouless), also receives an Honourable Mention as a useful and efficient play that makes the Old Testament story live again with originality and by characters seen personally and vividly: its Biblical diction, however, tends to a slowing down and evenness of pace that suggests a monotony which need not be present. Were it not for this the play might be recommended for publication.

In this Class there deserve mention also "The King's Daughter," by Janus (W. J. Parsons), another treatment of an Old Testament theme that is seen through the author's own eyes and developed as though it were an original piece—but marred by insecurity of syntax and diction: "Buttercups," by Tremore (Miss I. F. Grant), for some unfocussed ability and an agreeably original fairy: "The Lady of the Mercians," by Viola Grey (Miss E. O. Browne) for fresh, genuine, vital writing and an excellent opening that is rather thrown away on a conventional development without much sense of form; and "The Pioneers," by Margaret de Forest (Mrs. Pratt), for choosing a good original theme and a novel and desirable setting—advantages rather wasted on didactic and too equable dialogue, in which the chances of making a very good play are lost sight of.

There are no prizes given in this Class.

In Class II. (c), One-act Play for a women's cast, a prize, with a recommendation for publication, is awarded to "Saturday's Sensation," by Suzanne (Miss Joan de Fraine)—a play that does not aim at much achievement, but that succeeds unmistakably in its intention of being a good "thriller." It is skillfully engineered and developed, and the three surprises at the end are first-rate in devising and should come off every time. The writer's stage directions are not so good as her dialogue, and need the advice of a good producer before the play goes to press. "Mother Superior," by Sylvia (Miss Janet Ling), receives an Honourable Mention and a recommendation for publication, for a setting and simple picturesqueness of circumstance that make it valuable and specially useful for beginners. Things do not happen so easily in real life; but it is sincere and natural, and develops its interesting story to a success-

PLAY-WRITING COMPETITION

ful conclusion. "Sweethearts and Steakpies," by Wallflowers (Mrs. Thompson), and "The Plague of Sudley," by Wissington (Miss Maysel Jenkinson), also receive Honourable Mentions—the former for pleasant dialogue and agreeable setting and characterisation, and a graciousness of atmosphere maintained by much charm of detail, and only failing of more recognition by defective movement and some shapelessness in the general design—the latter for an exceptionally well-managed version of the Pied Piper story, attractive in its detail and in imaginative use of dialect, and only open to criticism for its unconvincing handling of the rats and an inconclusive finish. Beyond these, "Domestic Interlude," by Mary Vines (Miss E. M. Vokins), calls for some praise as a good attempt to carry out an original theme : the leisurely action, however, dissipates the chances it affords, and the possibilities of good situations are thrown away in the ingenious struggle to keep men out of the cast.

In Class III, Full-length play to play two hours, "A Square Peg," by Senga (Miss Agnes Johnson), receives an Honourable Mention for an interesting and sincere study of an original theme—the girl educated out of her class. There are, in particular, excellent studies of the girl's sisters and their men friends : but the development is unequal, and the end should be reconsidered and rewritten. The Northumbrian dialect limits the play's usefulness, and its notation is not expert enough : the play would stand a better chance if it were written out in ordinary English, preserving only the local idiom. Beyond this "The Encompasser," by Wissington (Miss Maysel Jenkinson), calls for some mention for its glimpses of a beauty not wholly grasped, and an interesting attempt at a stylisation of dialect among aristocratic people of long ago : more cannot be said for a work of some promise, as it only becomes fully coherent in the second act with a fine scene at the death-bed of the hero's mother. In this Class there also falls to be noticed "Heritage," by Two Aspirants, a dramatic entertainment intended for the use of Girl Guides ; of which it is necessary to say that if the writers wish to undertake work of this kind within the Guide movement, they should focus themselves more sharply upon it. On the technical side the writers obviously do not know how to carry out what they invent ; and it is not wise to bring up young people on anything so undramatic, colourless and didactic. In this Class there have been entered also a number of plays that are wholly without relationship to rural work : among these are several creditable emulations of Victorian dramatists that call for a word of appreciation. The best are "A Pillar of Rectitude," by Blackstone (Arthur Bartle), a pleasant variation upon the early manner of Pinero, that would act amusingly and acceptably : "The Labyrinth," by Loumin (Raymond Bantock), a work of subtlety and originality akin to Tchekhov in method without imitation of Tchekhov, and having a first act of considerable insight, beauty and delicate texture that unfortunately does not develop at the same tension and height in the later acts : and "Munitions of Mercy," by Standpipe (Capt. C. H. Markham), a highly creditable structure in Henry Arthur Jones' middle-early manner, with two scenes in a provincial Town Council that are well worthy of their model.

No prizes are awarded in this Class.

There are no awards of any kind in Class IV, a "Thriller" for men only. A word of praise is due to "The Knotted Cord," by Barbaruccio, (T. A. Gardner) as certainly the best entry in the Class, and as having some good dialogue and a purpose worked out with the perfection of a good machine—but at the same time wholly unsuited to rural work : also to "The Kill," by Budock (Miss D. B. Thomas), for a well thought-out theme and a hint that if this author were to work longer at the craft she might write a good play—the present one being too much of a duologue, and not really using the third character as it might be used for some necessary relief. "Two on the Limited Freight," by Three Stars trusts too entirely to the working-up of an inescapable horror without any development of humanised interest ; and it is technically inexpert in avoiding the necessary evolution of the story by an unconvincing and misplaced narrative.

PLAYWRITING COMPETITION.

Once more I have to record our most grateful thanks to Mrs. Penelope Wheeler and Dr. Gordon Bottomley for their adjudication. Competitors will realise what it means when two extremely busy people are willing to find time to examine in detail all the plays sent in, and to give them the benefit of wide artistic and practical experience.

The arrangements for next year's competition are now under consideration and I hope to be able to announce them shortly. If those who would like to have particulars will send a stamped addressed envelope to the Secretary of the Village Drama Section, circulars will be sent to them as soon as they are ready.

As so many of the entries this year are of a type unsuitable to the work we are doing, I reprint here what I wrote last year as a guide to our requirements.

The type of play needed is governed by the conditions which obtain in the majority of these small societies, i.e., small halls, with small stages, and no elaborate stage equipment, very little room for storing scenery and properties simple lighting, etc., and as a rule very little money to spend on the productions. The village players are keen, and very intelligent, and many of them have long ago passed the preliminary stages, and can appreciate a really good, well-written play, at the same time, the kind of play which, however well-written, deals with sophisticated love-affairs in a London flat, or alternately with the adventures of common mistresses and pert maids, is definitely not wanted. A good story of real human interest should be chosen, with plenty of action, and characters within the experience or imagination of country players. What we really want at the moment is originality of setting and theme, as well as more movement and action, and less chat. We should like to remind writers that village players and audiences have not yet quite outgrown the rough humour of the Elizabethans. Imaginative and fantastic plays of the right type are also needed, with plenty of humour,—and real stories.

JANET SCRUTON.

London readers should apply to 8, Adelphi Terrace for particulars of the monthly debates on current plays which are being organised in the Club Room.



ULEY VILLAGE PLAYERS
IN "CORIOLANUS."



THE HUNTINGTON WOMEN'S INSTITUTE
PLAYERS IN "A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S
DREAM."

BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE NOTES



THE JOURNAL OF
THE BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE.

INCORPORATING
THE VILLAGE DRAMA SOCIETY

President
LORD HOWARD DE WALDEN

Chairman of the Council:
VISCOUNT ESHER

Secretary: GEOFFREY WHITWORTH.

Hon. Treasurer: ALEC REA.

M.S.S. for publication in DRAMA will be considered if accompanied by stamps for return if unsuitable. All enquiries should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary at the Office of the League, 8, Adelphi Terrace, London, W.C.2.

Telephone: TEMPLE BAR 8507-8.

Neither the Editor nor the Drama League as a whole accepts any responsibility for the opinions expressed in signed articles printed in this Journal.

CAN Play-writing be taught? Are dramatists born rather than made? Such are among the problems dear to stage debating societies. And we are reminded of the old conundrum by Sir Barry Jackson's production of Mr. Laurence Miller's "Head-On-Crash" at the Queen's Theatre, London. This is not Mr. Miller's first play, but it is his first to be publicly performed, and the first which he has written since taking the Drama League Postal Course in the Elements of Play-writing. Our Director of Studies regarded Mr. Miller as one of his most promising pupils, and without wishing to infer that Mr. Miller's success has particular relevance to the queries which head this note, we may be excused from regarding it as—in the words of the *Daily Telegraph*—distinctly "a feather in the Drama League cap." The Postal Course has now been in existence over two years. The number of students is steadily growing, and if we were in the habit of printing testimonials to the value of our work, we could publish a striking array of grateful letters received from past and present students. Full particulars of the Course can be obtained post free from the Secretary of the League.

The list of proposed Drama Schools for this year is now ready. We are fortunate in having again secured the premises of the Ballet Club Theatre for our London Easter School. As this will consist predominantly of day sessions, we are hoping to arrange afternoon lectures by well known London actors appearing in current productions. Schools are also planned during June and July at Winchester and Shrewsbury, both ideal spots for summer holiday schools. Students at the latter should be able to combine their studies with visits to the Stratford and Malvern Festivals. It should be noted that these schools are not intended solely for producers. A special effort is being made this year to cater for the needs of amateur actors, particularly as regards technique of voice and movement. Full particulars of all schools may be had from the Schools Organizer, British Drama League.

This is Festival month throughout the Areas. Preliminary Festivals are in full swing, and all members of the League should make a point of attending such performances as occur in their own locality. Particulars as to places and dates can be obtained from Area Secretaries as follows: Northern Area, Mr. John Hirst, 9, Blackfriar's Street, Manchester; Western Area, Mr. C. M. Haines, 1, Alexandra Road, Clifton, Bristol; Eastern Area, Mr. G. E. Middleditch, 103, Th Ridgeway, Enfield, Middlesex; Scotland, Major Archibald Campbell, c/o The Scottish Community Drama Association, 3, Frederick Street, Edinburgh; Wales, Mr. D. T. Morris, 30, North Terrace, Mardy, Rhondda. The date of the National Final Festival in London has been fixed for the afternoon of Monday, May 22nd.

A County Drama Committee for Cumberland was formed at a meeting in Carlisle on January 21st, at which Miss Kelly spoke. Representatives of the W.I., the W.E.A., the Penrith Players and other dramatic societies, the G.F.S., and Girl Guides, and of elementary and secondary schools were all present, and the Lord Bishop of Carlisle also attended. The Education Officer, Mr. J. R. Mason, who took the chair, was elected as secretary of the new committee.

REPORTS FROM COUNTY ORGANIZATIONS

BANFFSHIRE FEDERATION S.W.R.I.

Last year the Fordyce W.R.I. produced a sketch written by one of their own members, Mrs. Dickson, the Manse. It was written primarily for themselves, and with special reference to their opportunities and requirements. The sketch was called "The Blawearie W.R.I." and was a comic portrayal of a W.R.I. meeting in a rather "backward" Scottish village. The sketch was first produced at an open meeting of the local W.R.I. and thereafter at Artradoul and Portknockie. It was also entered for the local division of the Scottish Community Drama Festival, where it received an encouraging criticism from the Adjudicator.

The Dramatic Society are again putting forward a team for the forthcoming Festival with another sketch written by Mrs. Dickson, entitled "Vitamin X" a one-act Scots comedy with a caste of five females.

The dramatic work done last session provided an added interest to the syllabus of the local W.R.I. and was very popular in the neighbourhood.

BEDS. COUNTY FEDERATION OF WOMENS' INSTITUTES.

During the first six months of 1932 dramatic activities were reported at thirty Institute Meetings. Clapham, Harrold and Langford organised Drama Classes.

Activities increased in the Autumn :—Sixteen Dean members (with ten men relatives) joined a class of twelve lectures on the History of Drama, a Reading Circle meets between lectures. Fifteen teams entered for the N.F.W.I. Festival (several include men players) Biddenham, Carlton, Dean, Dunstable, Milton Ernest, Pavenham, Woburn Sands (two) producing : "Safe Custody," Dean, Eaton Socon, Pavenham, Renhold ; "Tyranny and Teacakes," Sharnbrook : "Beric" (these plays are recommended by the V.D.S.) Harrold, Paddington : "Scene IV—The Mask of the Lady Margaret"—Bedfordshire's pageant play.

At preliminary sessions six teams will be chosen to appear before Mrs. Penelope Wheeler, the Adjudicator appointed by the N.F.W.I., at Bedford on February 24th, 1933. Some Institutes unable to compete, having studied the plays, will attend hoping thus to assist their dramatic education.

C. L. F. DALTON,
Hon. Sec., Drama Section.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE RURAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL.

Village Drama Competitions for the fourth year in succession were arranged in the Spring. Nine Groups competed, two offering two plays each.

The majority chose plays from the list of suggestions drawn up by the County Committee, but one original play of some merit, "Mrs. Verity," written for the players by Mrs. Hansen Bay, was presented by the Quy Dramatic Society.

The Terence Gray Trophy was awarded to the Haddenham Players for a delightful production of Act I of G. M. Sierra's play "The Kingdom of God."

The Shakespearean Trophy given only to teams reaching a certain standard was not awarded this year. Miss Edith Craig adjudicated.

This year two schools for Producers were arranged, an advanced school and an elementary one; the former had to be abandoned for lack of support.

Members of the Drama Group offer two visits to casts, one in the early stages of production and one about three or four weeks before the performance.

A meeting of producers in a small area to discuss the use of model stages was of some use this autumn.

CHESHIRE RURAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL DRAMATIC ASSOCIATION.

At a Meeting held on November 25th, 1931, it was decided by the Adult Education Committee of the C.R.C.C. to form a County Dramatic Association. Circulars were sent to all known Dramatic Societies, 39 Societies and 4 individuals have joined the Association (Affiliation Fee One Shilling, payable in January each year).

ADVISERS. 16 Advisers have offered their services to Societies which are contemplating the production of a play.

LIBRARY. The County Library has given very valuable assistance by providing books on the Drama, plays and sets of plays to affiliated Societies. Other Public Libraries have co-operated in this scheme and our thanks are due to them.

Affiliated Societies were invited to supply particulars of books and sets of plays which they would be willing to lend to each other. A list was compiled and circulated to all Societies in the Association.

SCHOOLS. Opportunities have been afforded to members of affiliated Societies to attend Schools at Liverpool, Keswick, Swansea, Great Hucklow and Chester. A Bursary was granted by the National Council of Social Service to 1 Cheshire Representative at the Swansea School. The value of this Bursary was approximately £2 10s. plus £2 2s. Tuition Fees.

11 Members attended a School at Great Hucklow, conducted by Dr. L. Du Garde Peach. Dr. Peach has kindly consented to allow members of affiliated Societies to attend any School he may hold in the future at Great Hucklow. 47 members attended the two-day School held in the Council's Offices, in Chester, on October 22nd and 23rd. This School was conducted by Mr. Robert Newton and resulted in a small profit thus making it unnecessary to call upon the National Council of Social Service for the "Deficiency Grant," which its Drama Committee had guaranteed.

STAGE. A portable Stage has been purchased and is now available at the Council's Offices.

BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE. The Association has affiliated to the British Drama League and it is expected that Cheshire will be represented by at least 3 Societies in the National Festival (1932-33).

ADJUDICATOR. At the request of the Association, Dr. Du Garde Peach promised to act as adjudicator at the W.I. Festival. Unfortunately, urgent business prevented his attendance and Mr. G. O. Sharman very kindly took his place at the last minute.

REPORTS FROM COUNTY ORGANIZATIONS

PRESENTATION. The C.R.C.C. has presented a Shield to be competed for by teams of men and women at the W.I. Drama Festival.

SELECTION OF PLAYS. In several instances, advice has been obtained for villages over the selection of plays. It is hoped to compile a list of such plays and the Secretary would be glad to receive suggestions from affiliated Societies.

DERBYSHIRE VILLAGE DRAMA LEAGUE.

Nearly 50 Village Drama Groups are now affiliated to the Derbyshire Village Drama League, organised by the Derbyshire Rural Community Council. A one-day School, held at Rowsley Village Hall on December 10th, proved very successful, with 70 village producers and others attending. Mrs. Monica Thorne and Dr. L. du Garde Peach (Chairman of the County Drama League) were the lecturers. Sixteen teams have entered for the county Festival, to be held at Rowsley (two days) and Newhall, and four teams will be selected to go on to the B.D.L. competition. Experienced help is given in the building of any new village hall and in the planning of stage accommodation. Experienced producers also are sent to the aid of all new societies, but only to give guidance. Stress throughout is laid on the villagers "Doing things for themselves."

DEVON RURAL DRAMATIC FESTIVAL.

The Committee have recently held their eighth Annual Festival at Tavistock. This fixture is regarded as one of great interest locally, and the attendance of the public was, as in past years, good. The Committee draw up the Rules governing the Festival, and arrange for a suitable adjudicator. Adults and children are judged in separate sections. The Festival is not competitive, although awards are made in Classes. Entries were received from eight groups, amongst whom were local Secondary Schools, Village Drama Societies, Womens' Institutes and Rangers. Five represent purely village activities, and it is interesting to note that two of these selected excerpts from Shakespeare's "Winter's Tale."

Miss Francis Mackenzie said she considered it a privilege to come to adjudicate especially in this district, which was the cradle of Village Drama. On the whole the performances were very good and reached a high standard.

DORSET RURAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

The work of the Drama Committee during the past year has been confined to running the annual festival held under their auspices.

The festival was held in February 1932, and attracted 10 entries from various dramatic groups in the county.

The Committee have always insisted that theirs was a Festival, not a competition; last February the Judge gave a criticism of each team, and those teams, reaching in his opinion a certain standard, were awarded a certificate of merit. Five out of the 10 competing teams gained such certificates.

The Judge, Mr. Leo Baker of Gloucestershire, was helpful and stimulating. He gave three separate criticisms, morning afternoon and evening, by arranging

for him to do this the Committee were able to obtain exemption from Entertainment Tax on the grounds that the Festival was educational.

Last year for the first time the Festival paid its way without asking help from the Carnegie Funds.

ESSEX COUNTY DRAMA SOCIETY.

The Essex County Drama Society, during the past year, has not been responsible for any county productions. It was suggested to the Society that, in view of a big pageant already arranged in the county, it would be unwise, in such difficult times, to have two productions.

The Society's activities have been mainly directed towards two objects. Firstly, to securing a revision of the regulations governing the granting of occasional stage play licences, and, secondly, the holding of lectures on production and cognate subjects.

As the result of the Society's representations to the County Council, the restrictions have been modified so that practically any village hall can, at small expense, be adapted so as to obtain a licence, and, moreover, the number of performances has been increased from seven to twenty-eight per annum.

ESSEX FEDERATION OF WOMENS' INSTITUTES.

The year's work of the Drama Sub-Committee of the Federation of Essex Womens' Institutes has comprised, in addition to the usual drama and recitation competitions, lectures, and a one-day school for producers.

An additional class has been added to the drama competition. This is the novice class in which none of the players may have appeared in county competitions before, although the producer may be experienced.

The one-day school for producers included talks on the problems of village productions and a rehearsal by the students of a one-act play and a scene from "Julius Caesar."

GLOUCESTERSHIRE RURAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL.

The Village Drama work has made a very distinct advance in Gloucestershire during the last twelve months. It was decided to make a change in the Festival arrangements by instituting a preliminary series of local festivals in six different centres in the County and sending the best teams from each to the final at Cheltenham. This arrangement saved travelling expenses to the teams, popularised the drama movement locally and made the final festival of reasonable size and of a quality which it was possible to expect the public to support. The result was wholly satisfactory; 42 teams entered as against 29 the previous year, and the standard of performance at the Final was extremely good. Mrs. Penelope Wheeler acted as adjudicator.

Mrs. Seeley, the Chairman of the Drama Committee, produced a "Pageant of Boddington Manor" in July with over 500 performers and with two performances daily for three days which drew crowded houses from all parts of the County.

Two drama advisors have been appointed, for the

REPORTS FROM COUNTY ORGANIZATIONS

North and South of the County respectively who help teams with the choice of a play, casting, rehearsing, etc., and give other guidance to the local producer.

HEREFORDSHIRE R.C.C.

Following the success of the Hereford Section of the National Festival of Community Drama held in Hereford in January, 1932, which was a very promising event, further efforts have been made to encourage village teams to come into the movement. Pioneer lectures have been given in many villages and in some cases they have induced teams to come forward and endeavour to provide their own entertainments and select plays for production at the National Festival.

A 3-days' Drama School held at the Training College in September last was not attended by a great number and men students were very much in the minority. The question of decentralizing the Drama School is to be considered by the responsible Committee. It may be that smaller 3 or 4 one-day (Saturday) Schools would be more successful in encouraging teams from isolated villages.

Progress might be claimed to have been made by the fact that this year there are 23 competing teams. The hearty co-operation of the Drama Committee of the Herefordshire Federation of Women's Institutes has helped very much by combining the preliminary round for the Women's Institute Drama Festival with that of the Herefordshire group for the National Festival of Community Drama. A three days' Festival has been arranged for on January 19th, 20th and 21st at which Mr. F. Sladen-Smith is to be the adjudicator. It is hoped to improve the stage arrangements in the Hereford Town Hall for the forthcoming Festival and all teams are looking forward to a very happy time.

The Rural Community Council has arranged with villages, which wish to present their plays in their own villages, to take other teams to help to make up an evening's programme of Drama. Efforts of this character are of great assistance to village teams in raising the necessary funds for expenses. A series of lectures has been arranged for this winter.

PERCY M. THOMPSON,
Secretary.

HERTS. DRAMA SUB-COMMITTEE.

The Drama Sub-Committee felt that great benefit would be derived by the Womens' Institutes from a one-day School of Drama, and it was decided to hold one this year instead of the Annual Competition. This was arranged. It was conducted by Mr. Howard Hayden who gave two one hour lectures on various aspects of production and a short talk on make-up. He conducted two demonstration rehearsals, one of "Antony and Cleopatra,"—Act V., Scene 2—and the other—a modern one-act play—"The Grand Cham's Diamond." The casts for the rehearsals were composed of volunteers from the audience (all W.I. members). The Institutes had been told beforehand that these scenes would be rehearsed but no one knew who would be called upon to take the parts. Miss Valerie Prentis and Miss Barr gave a lecture and demonstration on historical costume covering the period from the Norman Conquest to Elizabeth. This School was considered a great success and was very well attended. Six Institutes from the County are entering for the National Federation Festival judging on March 3rd.

COMMUNITY COUNCIL OF KENT

The Community Council of Kent Drama Sub-Committee tries, as far as possible, to encourage dramatic work in the villages by organising:—

1. Schools for Producers.
2. Advisers visits.
3. Festival.

The schools for producers are intended to help those who will act as producers in their villages.

A course of six lectures on dramatic production, five one day drama schools lasting for two sessions, and two lectures on Religious Drama, held at different centres in the County, were given during the year and proved successful.

The aim of the Adviser's visit is to give expert advice on the opportunities and difficulties arising out of actual work on which a group is engaged. Two such visits were made.

Organising a Village Drama Festival.

The County is divided into eight districts. Each district drama representative is asked to keep in touch with Village Drama Societies in his area and to notify the Committee of any new developments and needs of local groups.

KESTEVEN (LINCS.) FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S INSTITUTE.

This was the third year of our Drama Competition and there was a marked improvement in Production, Acting, and Choice of Plays.

Thirteen Institutes competed and the judging was in the hands of Miss Esme Church. This was arranged at two centres to suit the competing teams.

The 4 teams gaining the highest number of marks, and the best of the teams that were competing for the first time, gave their Plays later at a Public Entertainment in Sleaford before a crowded house. These were "Michael," "The Prize Pigeon," "The Dear Departed," "Farewell," and Scenes from "Midsummers Night Dreams."

A Banner is held by the winning team till the next competition.

In October a whole day Drama School was taken by Miss Mary Kelly and was a great success, each of our Institutes had the privilege of sending 3 members and in nearly every case Institutes were represented.

SUSAN L. GREENILL,
*Chairman of Federation
and of Drama & Music Sub-Ctee.*

STEWARTRY OF KIRKCUDBRIGHT S.W.R.I.

Our Federation had several little village classes with their own Amateur Producers, but the bulk of the work was done by the four Central Classes, held in different ends of the County, and taught by Miss Anna Donald of Edinburgh. The S.C.D.A. Festival was held in Castle Douglas on 4th February when four teams competed, one from the Kirkcudbright Class which gave "At the Well of Bethlehem" (by Mona Swann), one from Castle Douglas Class which gave Joe Corrie's "Shillin' a Week Man," and one from Parton Village—"The Gundy Shop" (by Andrew P. Wilson). "Towie Castle" (by Gordon Bottomley) was played by Dumfries Class at Dumfries Festival; and "At the Well of Beth-

REPORTS FROM COUNTY ORGANIZATIONS

"Lehem" won first place in the Area, and was privileged to go forward to the Divisional Finals in Glasgow. The task of taking a team of twenty-two to perform in Glasgow at 7.30 p.m. and return that night, was no easy one; particularly as there were a good many children in the cast.

The entertainments were, as usual, well patronised. Along with some of the above mentioned plays, Graham Moffat's "A Scrape o' the Pen," "The House Fairy" (by Laurence Housman), "But and Ben," and "Mari-gold" were performed at the different centres. Unfortunately the expense of producing these longer plays is so great, that without the assistance of the Federation they could not be done.

LANARKSHIRE FEDERATION S.W.R.I.

At the S.C.D.A. Festival held in Lanark in February, 1932, seven of the ten teams entered were from W.R.I.—viz., two each from New Tross and Lesmahagow, and one each from Yeildshields, Carstairs and Ravenstruther. The Plays performed were:—"The Scarecrow," Scenes from "Twelfth Night," "Eldorado," "Spreading the News," "Granny's Lea-Rig," "Riders to the Sea," "The Workhouse Ward."

One of the Lesmahagow teams took second place, with "Eldorado," being only one mark behind the winners: this team was also first in one session of the W.R.I. Challenge Cup Competition in Glasgow.

There are, of course, dramatic groups in many other Institutes, which did not enter teams for the Festival. Most of the groups work with producers taken from amongst their members, with one or two lessons from professional producers where funds allow of this. Grants are, in some cases, given by the Joint Committee of Music and Drama in Rural Areas (National Council of Social Service), to enable teams to pay for teaching.

LANCS. FEDERATION W.I.

The Drama Sub-Committee of the L.F.W.I. have been developing the Drama in the County for the last four years. Three County Competitions have been held.

In 1932 it was felt that a School of Production would be more helpful than another Competition and one was held in October on rather novel lines—Miss Mackleigh who conducted the School set a One-act Play "Snowed Up with a Duchess" which all the teams entering for the School studied—a week before the School, one team was drawn to perform the play—with the other teams as audience—at the end of the performance Miss Mackleigh criticised—pointing out where the production and acting failed—she then called on members of the other teams to play certain passages out of the play, after which she gave a lesson on production—movement—speech, etc. The scheme was a great success and much useful work has been done.

LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S INSTITUTES.

Institutes are encouraged to have courses of lectures on drama from experts, and it has been found advantageous to have the teacher present fortnightly, the

members doing practical work by themselves in alternate weeks. Several Institutes entered for the Leicestershire Rural Community Council Drama Competition, and Tugby W.I. succeeded in winning the shield with "Neighbourly Love" by F. A. Carter. Ashby Parva and Frolesworth W.I. proved a close second with "Michael" by Miles Malleson. The Committee arranged for the participation of W.I. members in the Pageant of Leicester in June. Fifteen Institutes took part, and it was entirely due to their wonderful co-operation, enthusiasm, and untiring energy that the thirteenth century costumes of Episode II (The County Episode) were made and that that Episode was such an outstanding success. Our small library of plays and books on drama has been extended and much used, and several costumes have been added to our Costume Cupboard. There are now 115 Institutes in our Federation.

MONMOUTHSHIRE R.C.C.

In Monmouthshire the progress of Village Drama Groups is very much bound up with the inauguration and development of the Monmouthshire Drama League. Believing that the best results can be achieved through co-operation, the Monmouthshire Rural Community Council some twenty months ago called a meeting of the representatives of all Dramatic Groups in the County in order to consider the practicability of forming a County Drama League which should affiliate as a body to the British Drama League. It was unanimously decided that the League should be formed and the Officers were elected, the Constitution completed and a Programme drawn up.

A number of Societies have affiliated and membership is increasing. Through their affiliation to the British Drama League, the County League is able to secure copies and sets of plays for its members from the Library of the National Organisation. Since the Promoters of the League felt from the beginning that the Producer is the all important person in a Drama Group if real progress is to be made, several Schools for Producers under Tutors of national repute have been held in different centres and in many localities Lectures and Demonstrations have been arranged. Perhaps the most important service which the Executive Committee of the League has been able to offer to Groups which are affiliated, is that of the advice and help for an Expert Drama Adviser with an actual Production. The generosity of the National Council of Social Service has alone made this possible, and Groups have improved out of all recognition as a result of such help. Not only is assistance given with the actual production, but advice is available with regard to the choice of plays, and legal and technical matters with regard to the amateur stage. In addition, help is often given by way of providing stage equipment.

The fruits of the labours of the League were evident during the week ending December 10th when a County non-competitive Drama Festival was held. There were twenty-seven entries, preliminary rounds were held at different Centres and, finally, six were selected to appear at the Final Performance in order that a representative display of the Drama Work being done throughout the County might be given. The standard of production and acting was uniformly high and a remarkably interesting collection of plays was given at the Final Performance.

REPORTS FROM COUNTY ORGANIZATIONS

MONMOUTHSHIRE F.W.I.

In this county the presence of a Rural Community Council might restrict the dramatic activities of the Women's Institute movement largely to women, but nevertheless a Dramatic Competition is held in public every Spring in which there are classes for scenes from Shakespearean and modern plays to be acted by women as well as by mixed teams.

The choice of play or scene is left to the individual producer, and two rehearsals may, if desired, be taken by a voluntary Dramatic Adviser appointed by the Drama Committee. The position of each team on the programme is decided by ballot, and not more than 40 minutes is allowed for each production. The Committee appoints a General Stage Manager, and in every case the action takes place before a curtain set. Two challenge Banners are awarded. This year it is hoped that Institutes inexperienced in dramatic work will enter a new Play-reading Class, and so take a first step towards dramatic production.

THE SHROPSHIRE DRAMA LEAGUE.

A very successful Festival was held at Wellington from April 28th—30th. The Adjudicator was Mr. E. Martin Browne and 36 teams entered. Comparing the standard of work with that of last year a distinct improvement was evident both in choice of play and manner of presentation.

The Junior Festival was held in Shrewsbury on May 28th. Miss Isabel Chisman being the Adjudicator. Ten plays were presented before an interested and crowded audience.

The Annual Meeting was held on July 9th and a large number of people gathered at Shrewsbury Castle afterwards to hear Miss Kelly and Mr. Maurice Farquharson speak.

A list of lecturers was drawn up by the Committee and issued to those likely to be interested and a number of Village Groups have availed themselves of this help which is given for a very small fee.

A small Library of Plays is now in existence in Shrewsbury and a reading room is available for members of affiliated Groups. This has been found very helpful for country members.

Two two-day schools have been arranged to take place in January and a large number of entries have been received for the next Festival.

SHROPSHIRE F.W.I.

At the Drama Festival held in Wellington last April teams from 14 Women's Institutes took part in it. The adjudicator was Mr. Martin Browne whose helpful criticisms were much appreciated. Lotar W.I. won a prize and Challenge Cup for a group staged on a lorry during the Carnival held in September last in aid of the funds of the Royal Salop Infirmary. The W.I. are hoping to take part in the pageant which is to take place when "Comus" is produced at Ludlow Castle in September, 1934.

E. BALFORE,
Chairman, Drama Sub-Committee, S.F.W.I.

SUTHERLAND FEDERATION S.W.R.I.

In Sutherland methods which might suit suburban and thickly-populated districts are not feasible owing to the amount of time and money spent in getting to a common centre. Most of the work is done by very busy people who devote as much time as they can towards the furtherance of Dramatic Art in the County.

Miss Orphost, a qualified producer, is employed and she divides her week by giving instruction for two consecutive days to each of three village societies within easy reach of one another. Thus each society receives her services six times in three weeks. When the distances are very great as at Tongue and Lochniver she gives an intensive week or fortnight as required. She helps the various local producers with their difficulties and they benefit greatly by studying her methods. She also teaches miming.

WESTMORLAND F.W.I.

The Westmorland Federation of Women's Institutes arranged a second Drama Competition for the Lowther Cup in 1932. Scenes from Shakespeare, not exceeding half-an-hour, must be chosen.

Only thirteen out of fifty-seven Institutes were brave enough to enter.

All producers and competitors were W.I. members. Women took the men's parts. There were varied opinions on the wearing of beards. The winning team wore neither beards nor wigs.

The sum of 7s. 6d. might be spent on each costume. But most Institutes either made or improvised them at much less cost.

The first round of the Competition was played in various centres throughout the County in the last week of November. The four teams chosen for the Final played again in the Town Hall, Kendal, on Dec. 3rd.

The Judge, in both the preliminary and final competitions, was Mr. C. James, of the Adult Education Department of the Lancashire County Council. He generously gave his services. In his criticisms he said that he had been surprised at the standard reached and delighted in the sincerity of the playing. He awarded the Cup to the Natland W.I. for their Trial Scene from "The Merchant of Venice." Burneside W.I. came second with a scene from "The Winter's Tale." Appleby W.I.—and Milnthorpe and Heversham W.I. came third and fourth.

V. M. KEESEY,
Chairman, Drama Sub-Committee.

YORKSHIRE F.W.I.

The Yorkshire Federation of Women's Institutes have held their Annual Drama Competitions, and have had the usual number of entries, the competitions lasted 5 days, and Miss Gwen Lally acted as Adjudicator. In some cases the performances were above the average, notably in Crayke Women's Institutes performance of "The Old Lady Shows her Medals," which Miss Lally considered ranked amongst the best W.I. performances she had ever seen. Burton Leonard's Scene from "The Tempest," was also excellent.

The Cups for the Competitions were awarded as follows:—All Women's Team, Shakespeare, Burton Leonard. Mixed Team, Shakespeare, East & West Ayton. Banner for Original Play, Meanwood. All Women Team, Kirby Moorside. Mixed Team, Crayke. Novice Team, Helmsley.

An interesting feature of the Competitions was the large number of Novice Teams entered.

The Drama Committee of the Yorkshire Federation have this year appointed a number of Drama Advisers who will visit Institutes and give advice as to how to start a Drama Society, and what plays to choose, etc. They have also added to their Drama Library which is in great demand.

AMY K. HAMILTON,
Federation Secretary.

REPORTS FROM V.D.S. BRANCHES

ABBOTS ANN W.I. DRAMA SECTION, HANTS.

Population, 600. Membership, 12.

We entered for the W.I. County Drama Competition last Spring with 2 scenes from "St. Patrick's Day" by Sheridan. We passed the eliminating trial and in the final tied 3rd with another village. Owing to the need for economy, we were not allowed marks for costumes but the judge complimented us on them—the majority of them were home-made, as were the powder wigs made of white crépe hair. We were invited to repeat these scenes at a party in Winchester given by its Women Citizens' Association and also at the Autumn W.I. Council Meeting at Brockenhurst. We are now busy on a fresh entertainment for next month.

ADLINGTON CONGREGATIONAL PLAYERS, LANCASHIRE.

Population, 4,393. Membership, 20.

Two performances of the play "The Cat and the Canary" (by John Millard) have been given.

The players were well cast, and the play produced at very little cost.

Throughout the performances the tense atmosphere was maintained, giving many thrills to the audience. Both presentations were most creditable to producer and players alike.

A. M. ALMOND,
Hon. Secretary.

ADEL-CUM-ECCUP WOMEN'S INSTITUTE.

The Dramatic Society in connection with the above W.I. was formed two years ago, and we are still a very enthusiastic band of Amateurs with a membership of twenty.

We have given the following sketches:—

"Mistress Runaway," by M. Lefuse.
"The Family Group," Mabel Constanduros
"The Bugginses' Picnic,"
"The Flood," Maysel Jenkinson.
"The Simple Sketch," Mary Kelly.

We have a monthly reading and during 1932 read the following:—

"Dover Road."
"A Woman of no Importance."
"Barretts of Wimpole Street."
"Cherry Orchard."
"The Merchant of Venice."

Also at one meeting we tried Miming and at another "Ever-Ready Plays." The latter were very popular.

We are only a very small village situated in the West Riding of Yorkshire.

ROSE STANHOPE,
Secretary.

ALBRIGHTON W.I., NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

The Albrighton Women's Institute Drama Society has not been going on as well as it should have been, and we have only done "Tyranny and Tea-Cakes" and "The Card Party" from Cranford, which was done at the last Festival at Wellington.

JEAN WITHERS,
Secretary.

ALDEBURGH MUSICAL AND D.S. SUFFOLK.

Population, 2480. Total Membership, 106. Acting Membership, 35.

We have produced "the Sport of Kings" and "Passing Brompton Road" during 1932, with separate casts. Both plays were very successful and well received. The Jubilee Hall, where we produce, has recently been renovated, and we now have excellent fixed lighting and front curtains, but no facilities for fixing sets of scenery, so we are obliged to use curtains for framing in. This year we have added a set of beige velvet which proved very effective. We already possess a blue velvet set. Our impromptu Concert Party has done good work during the Winter months in the outlying villages and has provided many cheery evenings of song and sketches for country folk who are out of reach of Cinemas, and other forms of entertainment. We are now hard at work, under our producer, Captain K. Basham, on a "Non-stop Vaudeville" for our Mumming Party in January. Altogether a "happy family" and a successful year.

VIOLET F. GARRETT,
Hon. Secretary.

ALDENHAM WOMEN'S INSTITUTE, HERTS.

Membership of Society, 20.

During the year, other Institutes have been entertained with short plays, and six members attended a one-day School of Drama at Welwyn on 12th October.

The full team (men and women) entered again for the Hertfordshire Society Village Drama Competition in February, staging "The Cradle Song" by G. Martinez Sierra (as translated by John Garrett Underhill), and, despite the difficult subject, were awarded the third place in the Competition. All costumes and scenery were made by members, as well as posters and programmes. At the close of the year rehearsals with "Oh! Susannah" (a farcical play in three acts) as a curtain-raiser "Five Birds in a Cage" which will be presented at the local hall on 20th January next.

(Mrs.) G. SWEET,
Hon. Sec., Drama Club.

ALNMOUTH W.I., NORTHUMBERLAND.

Population of Village, 600. Membership of Society, 12.

The Drama Society competed in the W.I. Drama Society Competition in Newcastle last April, the play was "In Safe Custody" and was spoken in Northumbrian dialect. The Society got 2nd award, only one mark behind the 1st. It was also given at a Drama Festival at Gateshead and the performance was praised.

Lady Gregory's play "The Travelling Man" was given with other plays in the Spring. There is to be a one-day Drama School at Alnmouth at the end of January, 1933, and again a W.I. Drama School in Newcastle in April. We hope to compete in the advanced class and will give another play in dialect.

The membership has rather dwindled owing to marriage and removals, but as many of the school children show promise and love acting, the Society hopes to increase its numbers.

E. PEASE,
Producer.

REPORTS FROM V.D.S. BRANCHES

ASHBURTON D. AND M.S., DEVON.

The Ashburton Dramatic and Musical Society, which first came into being in the latter part of 1928, entered for the first time in the British Drama League Festival in 1932, with the result that they were bracketed first with Dartmouth in the Western Divisional Final held at Plymouth in March last. The performance chosen for the Festival was the first Act of "The Lilies of the Field." The entire play was produced in Ashburton by the Society in the early part of 1932, and the season's programme also included a production of Gilbert and Sullivan's "H.M.S. Pinafore" by the Musical section of the Society under Mr. E. Dyson.

Ashburton has a population of about 2,400, and the Dramatic Society has a membership of about 150, which we feel is a very satisfactory number considering the size of the place.

As the few active members of the Society are also the moving spirits in almost everything that takes place in the town, and as all scenery, fittings, etc., used are made by the same members, it has not been found possible to do more than two productions and five or six readings in the course of a year. We are also handicapped in having to select plays that will draw a mixed audience.

H. S. JOYCE, Hon. Producer.

HIRST PARK MODERN BOYS' SCHOOL, ASHINGTON, NORTHUMBERLAND.

The Hall in the above School with its stage, which, though small, is well fitted up, is used by the children and by the teachers of the district.

Last March the Teachers' Society gave a four-act comedy, "Letitia Meets the Family" for two nights and although difficult to stage because of a scene involving a linnet, it was a great success. This play can be well recommended to societies who will take the trouble to pay attention to details.

At the Easter holiday, the children gave a musical play, "The British Lion" and some scenes from "The Critic."

The great event of the year was a week's production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" by the teachers and children combined. This was a great success and nearly a thousand children from local schools were able to see a complete Shakespearean Play in authentic costumes supplied by the Memorial Theatre, Stratford.

All the fittings, scenery and lighting for the above plays are made in the school workshops and the girls are busy making costumes for "H.M.S. Pinafore" which is to be produced at Easter, 1933.

C. S. HEMINGWAY.

EAST AND WEST AYTON W.I., YORKSHIRE.

Population about 1,000. W.I. Membership 60. Dramatic Section, 28.

Last winter we played scenes from "Two Gentlemen of Verona," with the help of men friends. Nine scenes make a charming little play, easily grasped by a village audience. "Who is Silvia," was sung as a quartette in the Moonlight scene, and we played Act 2, sc. 3 (our scene 7) indoors, in the glow from the fire. We play on a curtained stage, as described in "Shakespeare for Community Players," with few properties. We took Act 4, sc. I. to the County Competitions at York and won the Shakespeare Cup for

Mixed Teams with it. We made all our own costumes. We also played "The Spinsters of Lushe" which has an all women cast, dating it 1850 instead of 1812 as we had costumes, Paisly shawls, etc. of that period.

"Safe Custody," an amusing dialect play by a local author was enjoyed both here and in neighbouring villages.

Three members entered for the York English Speaking Festival, taking third and fourth places in large classes.

A. I. ROBERTSON,
Producer.

THE BARMOUTH A.D.S., MERIONETH.

The above Society gave two performances in Barmouth and one in Criccieth and Portmadoc early in January, all of which proved successful in every way. The effects so necessary to create the thrilling atmosphere were most effectively carried out and met with immense enthusiasm everywhere.

It may be of interest to other societies contemplating this play to know that the Train noises were produced in Barmouth from an H.M.V. Gramophone Record and passed through the "Talkie" loud speakers placed at the back of the stage.

The smoke and fire effects of the passing engine were made by fire boxes placed behind each window in the back of the setting and fired as the train passed each window, while the realistic effect of the train actually passing was produced by means of an arc-lamp and revolving flicker disc shining on each window. In the halls where no "Talkie" machine was available the noises were passed from the gramophone through an amplifier and loud speaker pick-up.

At the time of writing we are rehearsing for several performances in January, of "Thark," which play is giving any amount of entertainment to the cast and it is hoped that our audiences will be equally amused. It is not an easy play to tackle.

G. A. PIGGOTT.

THE BEACONSFIELD PLAYERS' CLUB, BUCKS.

In May, 1932, the Players' Club, which has 300 members, won the Howard de Walden Cup. The play entered for the Festival was Tchekov's "On the High Road," and it was produced by Mrs. Halford.

The Club's 1932-33 season began on October 28th with the performance of three one-act plays—"The Devil Among the Skins"; "Count Albany"; and "Beginner's Luck," an amusing sketch written by a member of the Club, Miss Molly Atkinson. At the November meeting the three one-act plays given were "Ebb Tide"; "The Long Christmas Dinner"; and "Two Gentlemen of Soho."

In December the Club gave two public performances of "A Hundred Years Old," and in January the Club held a meeting at which light sketches were given.

Future arrangements include a performance of "Nine Till Six" in April, and public performances of "London Wall" on March 23rd, 24th and 25th, while on March 3rd and 4th plays for the Festival of Community Drama will be given by the Players' Club and other societies in this division. The Club proposes to enter three plays for the Festival—"Count Albany," "The Long Christmas Dinner," and "The Devil Among the Skins."

V. HELLIWELL, Hon. Literary Secretary.

REPORTS FROM V.D.S. BRANCHES

ABBOTS Langley & Bedmond Community Players, HERTFORDSHIRE.

Population, 4245. Membership, 50.

In April we produced "Much Ado About Nothing" the seventh of a yearly series of Shakespearean plays. We began with "The Merchant of Venice" and followed on with "As You Like It," "Twelfth Night," "Romeo and Juliet," "Taming of the Shrew," and "Julius Caesar."

The very beautiful costumes for all these plays were kindly supplied by the V.D.S., and we always use curtains of a neutral tint.

As soon as possible after the performance we have a reading and lecture upon the play to be studied, after which the parts are distributed, that members may study during the Summer Vacation. We start rehearsals in October.

WANDA HOGAN, *Producer.*

BICTON AND DISTRICT W.I. DRAMATIC SOCIETY, SHROPSHIRE.

This Society was asked in April to help at an entertainment in aid of Church Funds in the Parish of Bicton. They presented several scenes from "The Merry Wives of Windsor." This served well as a dress rehearsal for the V.D.S. Drama Festival held this year in the Town Hall, Wellington, the last week in April, where they had a very good criticism.

They are now very busy rehearsing six scenes from "The Taming of the Shrew" for a W.I. entertainment to be held first week in February, 1933, in the village. Afterward one or two of the scenes will be acted in Shrewsbury at the V.D.S. Drama Festival at the end of February, 1933. This Society has also entered for the judging for the W.I. Drama Festival.

There are twelve members in the Society.

ANNIE TEECE, *Producer.*

BIDDENDEN A.D.S. KENT.

This is Biddenden's first entry into print in the pages of "Drama" so may we be permitted to tell you of our modest activities from the beginning?

Our membership is twenty, and our annual subscription 2s. 6d. for active and reading members alike.

Our productions have been:—

1930	"The Lilies of the Field."
1931	"Mrs. Gorrings' Necklace."
1931	"To Have the Honour."
1932	"At Mrs. Beam's."

Two nights only.

And on January 19th, 20th and 21st we are giving "Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary" for the first time we are trying to fill our small hall for three nights instead of the usual two. The readings of plays have included "A Kiss for Cinderella," "Pygmalion," "Loyalties," and "The Farmer's Wife."

MARJORIE GAISFORD, *Hon. Secretary.*

BRADFIELD (YORKS.) PLAYERS.

Membership, 24. Population, 250.

The Bradfield Players were formed only in 1930 and their second season, 1932-33, has been a busy one.

The chief performance in the village takes place immediately after Easter. A programme of One-Act Plays was given: Lady Gregory's "Spreading the News," followed by "Flood!" by Nora Ratcliff, a local play on the bursting of a reservoir dam at Bradfield in 1864. This had been given its first performance at

the Drama Festival in Sheffield in December 1931 and placed third out of eight competing teams, Bradfield being the only village team. The third play on the Easter bill was "Aunt Deborah" an eighteenth century farce, also the work of our producer.

During the summer we tried a "Radio reading," i.e., behind curtains, of a one-act play, at a W.E.A. rally, and we also visited the Sheffield Repertory Theatre for "The Brontes" and later for "Othello."

In May several members attended the B.D.L. School in Sheffield. On the Sunday evening a full rally of the Players gave a performance of an original, blank-verse Nativity Play, with incidental music written by one of the Players. This had been given in the village the Christmas before. The dresses, curtains, back-panels, furniture, etc., were also entirely village work. Mr. Geoffrey Whitworth, who was present, gave us a helpful and encouraging criticism.

In December we were invited to one of the Sheffield suburbs and gave "Flood," by special request, followed by James Gregson's "The Devil a Saint."

We have entered for the 1933 Drama Festival and play in Sheffield in February. The play, "Scapegoat," is again by our producer, Mrs. Ratcliff, and once more the Festival performance will be "for the first time on any stage."

Alice Barwell, *Hon. Secretary.*

THE BISHOP'S CASTLE A.D.S., SHROPSHIRE.

Population, 1,300. Membership of Society, 32.

The Society was formed in 1930, and in April 1932 three One-Act Plays were produced, viz., "The Green Monkey," "What do you think," and "A Meeting in Zoyland."

The Play "The Green Monkey" was also produced at the Shropshire Drama Festival at Wellington where it was very well received.

On November 30th, 1932, the Society produced a Three-Act Play entitled "The Dark Little People" by J. O. Francis which was a comedy of the Welsh Tribes. It was very well received and fully justified the Society's first attempt to produce a Three-Act Play.

The Society's chief difficulty is choosing Three-Act Plays for a country audience for which the Royalty is not excessive as our takings are limited.

H. A. ELLIOTT, *Secretary.*

BOURNEMOUTH SCHOOL D.S., HANTS.

Membership of Society, 550

The chief feature of the Society's activities in 1932 was a production of Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar" by the boys of the School aided by three members of the Staff, who played Mark Anthony, Cassius and Brutus respectively. The play was produced by a member of the staff, Mr. Wiseman. The production reached a high level and was very favourably commented on by the local Press. No drop curtain was used, but a special proscenium with steps leading up to it was made in the School Woodwork Shop, while the stage was draped with black curtains instead of conventional scenery. This served to show up the costumes to the best advantage. The steps in front of the stage enabled those in the procession and crowd scenes to reach the stage from the front and greatly added to their realism. The lighting which was another special feature of the production was done entirely by top and spot lights.

A. H. ROGERS, *Hon. Secretary.*

REPORTS FROM V.D.S. BRANCHES

BUCKLAND W.I.D.S., DEVON.

Membership, 10 women, 4 men.

At our Annual Entertainment in April we presented R. A. H. Goodyear's 3-Act Play, "Lady Hard to Please." In the same month we entered two teams in two different classes for the W.I. Exhibition Drama Competition. In the Shakespeare Section from five given plays we chose "The Trial Scene" from "The Merchant of Venice." For a scene from Cranford we took "A Card Party" adapted by Beatrice Hatch. In the latter class we were placed second.

We entered two plays for the Tavistock Dramatic Festival in December. "The Spinsters of Lushe" by Philip Johnson, for which we were awarded a 1st Class Certificate, and Act I of Andrew P. Wilson's "Cock o' the North," which won a Second Class Certificate.

EDITH W. MARSHALL, *Producer.*

BYWELL W.I., NORTHUMBERLAND.

The Drama Section of the Bywell W.I. have 20 members.

Plays done have been:—"The Artistic Touch," a scene from "The Taming of the Shrew," "Elizabeth Refuses," "A Visitor of Distinction," "The Escape from Lochlevan," and "The Fool of Dunvegan." Three mimes, "Barring of the Door," "Green Broom" and "A Little Nut Tree." Also two garden plays "Happy Man" and "Dame Truth," the latter opening with a mime of a village crowd. All these plays were performed several times.

We entered for the Drama Competition arranged by the Northumberland County Federation of Women's Institutes held in Newcastle in April, and were awarded the Novice Cup.

Several of our members have attended Drama Schools held by the British Drama League and Women's Institute. At present we are attending a course of Lectures on Dramatic Art, arranged by the W.E.A.

In connection with our own group we have had a talk on Drama, a Make-Up Demonstration, and two Shakespearean Recitals.

LOIS YOUNG, *Producer.*

CAMBERWELL AND LAMBETH RANGER DRAMATIC SOCIETY.

On February 20th and 22nd we held our Annual Festival; nine Companies competed and a high standard of acting was attained all round. Mr. John Hampden acted as adjudicator and gave some excellent advice. The shield was awarded to the 3rd. Stockwell Ranger Company for their production of a scene from "The Cradle Song." The winners and one other Company who showed outstanding merit were asked to perform their plays in aid of the London Foundling Site.

We gave our Second Annual Performance in April, when we presented "The Princess and the Woodcutter," "The Spinsters of Lushe" and "A Day at Ephesus." A further production was given in November consisting of "Foot-Prints," "Op-o-me-Thumb" and "The Stolen Spell." Both performances were very successful from the point of view of production and reception.

The present strength of the Society is eighteen Companies and it is encouraging to discover interest and enthusiasm in the reading and production of plays gaining ground amongst the Ranger Companies of this District.

MAY RICE, *Hon. Secretary.*

CHAPELTOWN DRAMATIC SOCIETY (YORKS).

Membership, 80.

We heralded Spring by reading "Murder on the Second Floor"—not a very appropriate herald! We later dabbled in phantasy by giving a finished production of "Mrs. Moonlight," to which the cast and members were really attracted but which the public left severely alone. It raised the ever-open question of whether one should pander to the public or give "the food of the gods" to the few. Other readings included "Pygmalion" and "Farmer's Wife."

The Autumn session opened with the reading of "Berkeley Square," but owing to the loss on "Mrs. Moonlight" we had to have a smaller room—attached to a pub instead of the previous well-equipped one. Our members rallied round and numbers did not decrease. Some one said it was the smell of the beer! We gave a finished production called "Letitia Meets the Family"—a rollicking farce and a huge success in every respect. We have entered two plays for the Festival, "Trifles" and "Butterflies in the Rain."

H. EDLEY, *Hon. Secretary.*

CHURCHSTOKE PLAYERS, MONT.

Membership, 30.

We started again this Autumn, after eighteen month's lapse, and for our new work chose a Nativity Play. Not being able to find the play we wanted, we wrote one for ourselves, of seven scenes and three moving tableaux, and using a prologue, written by the Dean of Winchester, which linked the story together. There was music between the scenes, and Geoffrey Shaw's haunting carol "How Far is it to Bethlehem?" was the foundation of one scene, played without speech, in which the Shepherds, the Kings, and four other characters in the play, were seen passing along the road to Bethlehem, guarded by angels as they travelled.

We used no scenery, only curtains, but our costumes were elaborate. We were thankful for the extraordinarily cheap and lovely materials supplied by Burnet of Covent Garden.

There is no more suitable production for a village than a Nativity Play. We have proved that now.

F. E. L. BARSLEY, *Producer & Hon. Secretary.*

COLSTERWORTH W.I., LINCS.

Colsterworth, Near Grantham, Lincolnshire, with a population of 800, have a W.I. with a membership of 70, first entered for the W.I. Drama Competition in 1930, securing second place in the final at Sleaford with "Playgoers"; 1931 third place in final with "Footprints"; 1932 did not reach final with "Calais to Dover." We are hoping to enter again next year, play not yet decided. We have had no classes or lectures, excepting the Drama School held at Carlton Scoop this Autumn, which two of our members attended and enjoyed.

R. E. ADDLESEE, *Secretary.*

CONNOR DOWNS AND GWITHIAN W.I., CORNWALL.

Our Society is the Dramatic Section of the Connor Downs and Gwithian Women's Institute.

The membership varies from 12 to 40, according to whether we are preparing a play or not. The whole W.I. really counts as members.

REPORTS FROM V.D.S. BRANCHES

Population of Village, 200.

We have had lessons on Play Producing by Miss Lydia Martin of St. Ives.

We have done 3 small sketches : One Nativity Play by Mrs. Joseph Hocking ; "The Farmer's Wife."

We have in contemplation : "The Passing of the Third Floor Back" ; "Mr. Samson," by Lee.

As we are so busy preparing "The Third Floor"—we dare not try to enter the Competition this year. Ours is entirely a village community and we have very few possible actors and actresses, especially for sophisticated parts. We find great difficulty in selecting suitable plays. The "Drama" paper is a tremendous help.

ANNIE HOCKING,
Producer.

COXWOLD VILLAGE PLAYERS, YORKSHIRE.

We are a small Society in a small village of 250 inhabitants—numbering 17 members.

During the Summer we do little or no work in the field of Drama—we are all busy working folks, and cannot spare the time from home duties. When Autumn comes we begin to prepare an entertainment. This year we produced a scene from "Henry VIII.", Sc. I, Act III. It was the first Shakespearean play our Society had attempted, and it was voted successful by the audience, who enjoyed it. The next play was "The Master of the House," by Stanley Houghton, a very dramatic play which gives much scope for drama, and containing fine parts; this too was most successful. The third play was "The Grand Cham's Diamond," and was preferred by some of the audience, containing as it does, a sound element of humour, and clever dialogue.

During the season we heard Miss Gwen Lally at her Week-end School of Drama at Easingwold, lecture on "Gestures," etc., and watched her "Make-up" demonstration. Last April we entered for the York Drama Festival of the W.I., and won a first-class certificate. Our players did the beautiful play "The Bishop's Candlesticks," which they produced at home first. This is still—by some people, voted the best play we have ever done.

SELINA BURNETT,
Hon. Secretary.

CRICK W.I.D.S., NORTHANTS.

Population, 680. Membership, 20.

In April, 1932, eight of our members, including husbands and sons, took part in the County production of "Prunella" by L. Housman and Granville Barker, in the Northampton Repertory Theatre.

We entered Siern's beautiful "Cradle Song" (first act), with a mixed team in the County Festival, and were placed first by F. Sladen-Smith, and are now entering it in the National Drama Festival.

We have just produced "Six who pass while the Lentils boil" by Stuart Walker, in black and white costumes and with a red décor designed by a member ; "Michael" by Tolstoy ; "A Family Group" by Mabel Constanduros ; "Bewitched," a Shadow Play by F. Berrell.

We have been fortunate in having an excellent lighting installation, with dimmers, made for us by the son of a member.

A. HOWELL,
Producer.

REPORTS FROM V.D.S. BRANCHES

DATCHWORTH PLAYERS, HERTFORDSHIRE.

Population of Datchworth, about 500. Membership of Society—Numbers fluctuate 6—12.

On Shrove Tuesday, 1932, we produced two Shrovetide Plays by Hans Sachs (translated by Miss Ouless) "The Old Game" and "Dame Truth," and, to fill up the evening, "Moggeridge's Cow." We entered all three for criticism in the Herts. R.C.C. Competition. We are now at work on a short scene from "Richard II" and "A Meeting in Zoyland." These are also entered in the above Competition, and we hope to produce them before Lent.

We have started a Music Section, and are learning to make and play Musical Pipes, with the aim in view of forming an orchestra. This is all very difficult as our members are people who have to work hard and cannot easily attend rehearsals and practices, but we do try to keep going, and to work at what is worth while.

E. GREGORY, Hon. Sec. and Producer.

DUNMOW PLAYERS, ESSEX.

For the greater part of the past season the Barn Theatre has been closed for renovation by Mr. Basil Dean the present owner and no further performances have been given there by The Dunmow Players. Two performances of the Essex dialect Comedy "The Diddycoy" produced by Col. T. Gibbons were given by the original cast at The Great Hall, Bishops Stortford in January, and the first act of the same play was given at the Chelmsford Exhibition in June and a Pantomime "Aladdin" is at present in rehearsal to be presented in Dunmow on January 3rd.

It is hoped when the renovation of the Barn Theatre is completed to commence the new season with A. A. Thomson's original play "Circus," to be followed by "The Queen's Ring," an Essex dialect comedy by H. Cranmer Byng, and "Joshua," an Essex dialect comedy by S. L. Bensusan.

The original Essex plays so far produced at the Barn Theatre have recently been published by Benham & Co., Colchester, for the "Essex Play Society," and the first volume includes "The Diddycoy" by H. Cranmer Byng, and "The Furriner" by S. L. Bensusan.

EAST DEAN READING SOCIETY, (SUSSEX).

East Dean Reading Society—formed in October to read plays—Galsworthy's "Strife," Yeats "A Pot of Broth," "Land of Heart's Desire," "Countess Kathleen" Drinkwater's "Abraham Lincoln" and Shakespeare's "Winter's Tale" and "Richard II," have been read. A play is to be produced for the W.I. Drama Festival in Eastbourne in May. Reading Society, 14 members; W.I., 72 members. East Dean 500 population (about).

FORT WILLIAM A.D.S., INVERNESS-SHIRE.

Population of Fort William, 3,500. Membership of Society, 30.

Within the last twelve months have produced :—Barrie's "What Every Woman Knows" and "Twelve Pound Look"; Synge's "Shadow of the Glen"; Milne's "Wurzel Flummery" and "No Servants"; Philpott's "Purple Bedroom"; Brandani's "Spanish Galleon." Last mentioned won in Preliminary Drama Festival in 1932.

Now rehearsing :—"Best Laid Schemes," "The White Hawk," "Postal Orders," and "Cateran's Heir." K. M. GRANT, Secretary.

REPORTS FROM V.D.S. BRANCHES

FRAMLINGHAM A.D.S., SUFFOLK.

Population, 2,500. No. of Members, 120.

The Society started the year with a series of Play Readings which were well attended and eminently successful. Members of the Committee made a point of being present at each Meeting and were able to pick out members who showed promise and might prove suitable to appear on the stage in future Productions.

In October rehearsals commenced for the Comic Opera "Dogs of Devon," in which over 40 members took part. Special scenery and lighting arrangements were hired and made, all of which were worked by the cast. Nearly 1,000 people saw the show and it was unanimously voted one of the most successful, artistically, that the "Fads" (as they are colloquially known) has produced. All the organizers (including the Producer) and orchestra were amateurs.

Members are now busy rehearsing the 1-Act Play "Everybody's Husband" in preparation for the Festival to be held in Ipswich in February—the first to be organized, it is understood, in the Eastern Area under the auspices of the British Drama League.

G. HULME-WELCH, Hon. Secretary.

THE FRESHFORD PLAYERS, SOMERSET.

Population, 500. Membership, 15.

In November produced "Third Time Lucky," a delightful "crook" comedy in 3 acts, by Arnold Ridley, 10 characters.

Our most successful effort and played on two consecutive nights.

The two scenes, made and painted by members of the Society, presented no special difficulty; one, the interior of a Rectory study, with French door leading in to garden overlooking Dartmoor; the other the interior of a Mayfair flat with window opening over the street and a large safe in which one of the characters hides.

The Rectory scene for the 1st and 3rd acts was a box set with back sheet outside French door, and stood throughout, the Flat scene being arranged with curtains drawn over it; the upper part of the French door with a panelled window seat in front of it serving as the window.

A somewhat difficult piece to memorize as the sentences are very short; the third act in particular called for most careful rehearsal.

VIVIAN RITSON, Producer.

GLEMSFORD W.I., SUFFOLK.

Population, 1,200. Membership of Institute, 90. Over 30 act, also children and men. Besides smaller items we have produced "Dame Truth" and "The Wandering Scholar" (E. Ouless); "Caralac" (original), entering this for the County Drama Festival but not reaching the Finals; two mimes, "Bluebeard" and "Sleeping Beauty" (original), arranged to Country Dance tunes. These mimes were our most finished productions and caught at the imagination. During the absence of the producer a member successfully produced "Footprints" (V. M. Methley) and "Five Birds in a Cage" (Gertrude Jennings). Besides other things we are now rehearsing for a village production of a Nativity Mime (E. Martin Browne) to be given in the Church. Our beautiful Hall was recently converted by husbands and brothers from a disused factory.

MAYSEL JENKINSON, Producer.

GNOSALL, STAFFS.

The Gnosall Dramatic Club has a membership of 20, out of a population on the electoral register of 800.

During the year we have read and discussed "The Man with a Load of Mischief," "And so to Bed," "Mr. Pim Passes By," and "Milestones"; also several one-act plays.

We have produced part of Act V. of "Antony and Cleopatra" for the Women's Institute Festival at Stafford and for the Shropshire Festival at Wellington, as we are on the Border between the two Counties.

Three of our members heard Miss Mary Kelly speak at Shrewsbury, and two of us went to a demonstration on make-up.

We have just produced our own dramatic version of the "Christmas Carol," and have three short plays in rehearsal.

The local branch of the W.E.A. arranged a lecture on "Galsworthy's Plays," at which there was an interesting discussion.

WINIFRED J. DAVEY, B.A., Producer.

HASFIELD, GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

MRS. FRANCIS BAKER'S COMPANY.

The Season opened in November with three short plays and a musical sketch written and arranged by the Producer in order to avoid Acting fees. A Tragedy entitled "Sad Coincidence," a musical sketch in a Railway Carriage, a Modern Cinderella, and a sentimental comedy entitled "The Gentleman Burglar." Our make-up has improved great deal this year also our lighting arrangements. In Halls which have no electric light a very effective result can be produced by the use of two Primus Lamps one each side of the stage at a height of about 5 ft. on a level with the front of the stage, then have two Pitco electric bicycle lamps each side shining on the back cloth to avoid all shadows. We have made two 9-ft. 3-fold screens covered both sides with Bolton sheeting which can be painted any colour and doors, windows etc. can be painted on to them. We have performed in four neighbouring villages, and have another half-dozen engagements.

Producer.

THE HAYLE PLAYERS, CORNWALL.

During 1932 the Hayle Players have given three entertainments. On January 14th and 15th they gave three one-act plays—"A Village Jumble," "At the Coach and Horses," and "A little Fowl Play."

On April 20th and 21st they gave "Lord Babs," and on Nov. 23rd and 24th, "Mr. Pim Passes By."

Hayle has a population of between four and five thousand, but has no good Hall available for plays.

The Players have been unable to attend any classes or lectures.

MARGERY BERNING, Hon. Sec. and Producer.

HEMPSTEAD W.I., GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

With a total of twenty-four performances, the dramatic section of this Institute has had a busy and varied year. The outstanding success has been the winning of a "gold star" certificate—the highest standard attainable—awarded at the Rural Community

REPORTS FROM V.D.S. BRANCHES

Council's Drama Festival, at Cheltenham. The play with which the Hempstead W.I. secured this distinction was "Op-o'-me-Thumb" (Fenn and Pryce), and it was subsequently performed, by special invitation, at Bourton-on-the-Water.

Summer brought pageant work for the section, several members spending a very happy week as Early Victorians in Mrs. Seeley's production of her own pageant, "The Boddington Oak," at Boddington Manor. By way of experience in pastoral playing, the section had Morton Howard's "Secret Engagements" performed by members at Hempstead Court and Elmore Court. The same author's "A Family Affair" was presented three times by the Institute at the beginning of the year, and his "Haste to the Wedding" and "The Bengal Bangle" have each been done five times during this winter season. Incidentally, for male roles, Hempstead secures the assistance of masculine relatives, the producer being of opinion that the result is a better balanced performance and distinctly more convincing.

WINIFRED MORTON HOWARD, *Producer.*

HUNTINGTON W.I., D.S., YORKSHIRE.

Membership of Society, about 30.

Last April we gave "A Midsummer Night's Dream" in Elizabethan Costume and almost without scenery. In Theseus' Palace and Quince's House only necessary properties were used, while the woodland scene was shown by a tree and drop-screen suggesting distant hills, with a mossy bank for Titania and Bottom. The chief feature of the lighting was the sunrise in the Hunting scene. We entered a scene for the Y.F.W.I. competitions and gained a 2nd class certificate.

In December we gave "The Simple Sketch" by Mary Kelly, "The Area Belle," by W. Brough and A. Halliday and a mime, "Lord Bateman," arranged by V. B. Lawton to raise funds for the production of "Nine Till Six," which we hope to give next March.

MARGARET E. WILKINSON,
Hon. Secretary

THE HUNTON DRAMA SOCIETY, KENT.

This Society was formed in November, 1931, with a membership of 21.

The following plays were produced during the winter—"The Area Belle," and "My Turn Next" and "The Bath-Room Door," and played to crowded houses both here and in two adjoining villages.

The Society also organized a Social and Dance.

The following plays—"The Crimson Cocoanut," "Wayside War," and "Box and Cox," are being rehearsed and will be produced in February, the object being to raise funds for new scenery.

The costumes for "Wayside War," will be hired from the Village Drama Costume Cupboard. We would like to thank the Village Drama Society for their advice.

The present membership is 22. The population of the village is 735.

ELIZABETH STARTUP, *Hon. Secretary.*

KELLY DRAMATIC SOCIETY, DEVON.

Population under 240. Membership: Men 20, Women 26, Children 16. Total, 62.

We have been fortunate this year in securing Mrs. Hainselin as our Producer. Though living some miles away she has thrown herself into the work with

such unsparing energy and enthusiasm that we have been able to attempt great things.

For our Ascension Day Play we revived an old favourite, "Saul and David," and this autumn we have been very brave and tackled Shakespeare. It was the younger members mostly who came forward to try and see what they could make of a scene from "Winter's Tale," and after weeks of hard work gave a good and spirited performance at the Tavistock Dramatic Festival, and won a third class certificate.

Also for the first time our Children entered for the Festival and won a third class. The play, "The House that Jack Built," was produced by two of our members.

DOROTHEA KELLY, *Hon. Secretary.*

KEMPSEY W.I. DRAMA SECTION, WOR.

Members in Institute, about 120—13 in Drama Section—Secretary of Drama, Miss Berkeley Hill—Producer, Dr. Nover.

Three plays were produced in February, 1932 to raise funds for the Institute. After expenses, about £10 was handed over.

Plays produced: "Footprints," Violet Methley. "Mechanical Jane," "Honest Folk"—Austin Hyde. There has been no Drama Festival in 1932 in Worcs.

E. SCOLE, *President, Drama Section.*

KENSWORTH JUNIOR DRAMATIC GROUP, BEDFORDSHIRE.

Kensworth is a village on a spur of the Chiltern Hills, about 2 miles from Whipsnade. There are about 500 people, but the houses are very scattered. The Group consists of about 16 young people all under 16 years of age and over 10. All are either school children—elementary or holding free places at Secondary Schools—or girls who work at factories. It is difficult to choose suitable times for all to attend, but keen interest is shewn. We are performing "The Rose and the Ring" on January 9th. During the Summer we have had folk dancing and have tried a little miming—"Sir Eglamore," "A Keeper would a-hunting go," etc. There are signs that a few older ones will help us in time.

E. E. TODHUNTER, *Producer.*

KNEBWORTH PLAYERS, HERTFORDSHIRE.

Population, 2,500. Acting Membership, 23.

This Society in 1932 gave two plays, "The Man from Toronto," on April 22nd and 23rd, and "Nothing but the Truth" on December 2nd and 3rd. Both plays were produced by Mr. Arthur E. Robinson, and the first won for the Society the "Longmore" Shield, competed for annually by Amateur Dramatic Societies in Hertfordshire. "The Man from Toronto" was preceded by a curtain-raiser, "The Mock Beggar."

Since the formation of the Players ten years ago eighteen plays have been performed, including "Woodbarrow Farm," "If Four Walls Told," "Grumpy," and "Aschil" (by Metcalf Wood, their first producer). Choice of plays has been somewhat restricted by the limited scenery at their command. In spite of this the performances have always been well received and very favourably commented upon.

If a suitable play can be found the Society hopes to enter for the Welwyn Drama Festival in 1933.

G. U. GOODE, *Hon. Secretary.*

REPORTS FROM V.D.S. BRANCHES

LAMBOURN & DISTRICT D.S., BERKS.

Population, about 2,000. Membership, 30.
The year has been a very full one. We produced "At Mrs. Beams" in April. It was not one of our most successful productions—a difficult play to put over—and perhaps a little too clever for a country audience.

We entered the Newbury Drama Festival with "Ebb Tide." Although the adjudicator pulled us to pieces very thoroughly, we learned a lot of stage-craft and the benefit has been obvious since.

We produced "The Ghost Train" in December, which was most successful, and was considered a very good production.

We are now preparing three one-act plays for an evening in February: "The Bracelet," "The Dear Departed," and "Playgoers."

We are sending a team to do "The Mock Beggar" at the forthcoming Festival at Newbury.

A very good year, and our members are most enthusiastic.

THE LANDBEACH PLAYERS, CAMBRIDGE.

Owing to illness we have not been able to produce any plays during 1932, but in the summer we gave a performance of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" which we had given in 1931.

We have met at intervals and read good plays, thus keeping the Society together as much as possible.

We are now rehearsing "Twelfth Night" and parts of "A Winter's Tale," which we hope to give later in the summer.

Population of village, about 400. Membership, 30.

L. A. ABRAHAM,
Hon. Secretary.

THE LEATHERHEAD AND BOOKHAM DISTRICT GIRL GUIDES, (SUSSEX.)

Twelve Companies are affiliated.

In January, the Leatherhead Rangers, Guides and Brownies produced the Pageant Play "Adventurers" by Kitty Barne. To facilitate rehearsals the various scenes were performed by different Companies and Packs. The dresses were borrowed or made up so that no expense was incurred in that way and the performers were delighted to find that they had cleared nearly £20.

The 1st Horsley Girl Guides gave Bethlehem Tableaux on Wednesday, December 21st, 1932, covering the period from the Annunciation to the boyhood of Jesus Christ in the carpenter's shop at Nazareth. The final tableau: "O come, let us adore Him" included every figure in the previous tableaux grouped round the manger with the Angel Gabriel and the Heavenly Host high up in the back-ground.

P. BARTHOLOMEW,
District Secretary.

LITTLE WALTHAM PLAYERS, ESSEX.

Population of village: about 700. Membership of Society: men 14, women 17. Total, 31.

Although handicapped by the fact that the licence in the Village Hall expired in the middle of January, 1932, and owing to new regulations and restrictions

has not yet been renewed, the Players managed to perform a pantomime "Cinderella" (Novello) in January and to repeat it in Chelmsford and Margaretting for local charities. During the early Summer they performed out of doors, an entertainment called "The Seasons," compiled by their producer. This included old time songs and folk dances with connecting dialogue for Spring and Autumn, the latter centring round the Harvest Home Supper, and the former round the Maypole. "Summer" was up-to-date in songs and dialogue and set at the seaside. Father Time and the New Year commented on each Season.

During the latter part of the year the Players have organised several Social Entertainments, and are now rehearsing a pantomime "Ali Ba-Ba," in hopes that by the time they are ready, the Hall may be licensed.

(Mrs.) A. E. GAYFORD,
Producer.

LLANYMYNECH AND DISTRICT A.D.S.

Llanymynech, a border village of Shropshire and Montgomeryshire with a population of 1,000 inhabitants, has a small Dramatic Society, formed 1928, with a membership of 26. 16 playing members: 6 males, 8 females.

February 1932, David Garrick's "Miss in her Teens" was successfully produced, with a curtain-raiser entitled "Their Husband" by Alice Gertensberg. We were seriously handicapped in these productions owing to several of our older members leaving the district and others being from home. Despite this, younger members came forward and did admirable work. Costumes which were hired from the V.D.S. were most attractive.

We are very grateful to the British Drama League for their help.

M. B. RANDLES,
Hon. Secretary.

MARLDON PLAYERS ASSOCIATION (DEVON).

Marldon Players' Association came into existence in January, 1932. It has a membership of 32. Its activities to date have been the production of simple one-act plays. In April we produced "The New Waiter," "Uncle Ben," "The Wrong Flat" and "Blathewick's Diplomacy"; in November, "Jiggins," "The Man on the Sofa" and "A Kiss in the Dark"—each group consisting an evening's entertainment. The association has aroused considerable interest in the neighbourhood and each of its entertainments has drawn a full house. In April last the local players gave a performance in the neighbouring village of Collaton St. Mary and next month they are invited to Denbury.

Interest is now centred in "The House with the Twisty Windows" and "Ici on parle français"—the former being entered for the Festival Community Drama.

Great progress in the art of acting has been made during the last twelve months under the producers, Messrs. W. A. Canning, P. Woods and J. Watson.

Since the population of the parish is only about 450 a full house can only produce something less than £10 and to meet the royalty on an average full-length play is rather a difficult problem.

W. A. CANNING,
Chairman.

REPORTS FROM V.D.S. BRANCHES

MAYFIELD PLAYERS, SUSSEX.

Population of parish 3,000, of village uncertain. Membership, 1932 : 11 Players ; Hon. Members, W.I. Group and Pipers, 19. Total, 30.

This year we gave : (a) 2 performances of "Arms and the Man," well attended ; (b) programme of mimed songs and ballads, and "The Grand Cham's Diamond" ; (c) 4 members acted in Lady Harvey's sketch "The Wedding Dress" at the W.I. Drama Festival at Lewes, and got good criticism ; (d) "Postal Orders" as part of local entertainment.

We now have a good club-room, a piano, and have acquired a W.I. Group, principally for mimes, and a pipers' group, hoping to form a band. The first have made a good first appearance. Verse-speaking and play-reading meetings are being started. (We have entered for the East Sussex W.I. Drama Festival and the Community Play, "As You Like It.")

AGNES COCKLE, Producer.

MINCHINHAMPTON D.S., GLOS.

The Society concluded the 1931-32 season with two performances of the following one-act plays : "The Wreckers" by Cecile O. Adair, "The Illusionist" by Philip Johnson, and the "Buried Cable" by Harry Graham.

The show went with a swing, and concluded a very successful year.

At the commencement of the present season, the Society decided to attempt their first three-act play, and "The Farmer's Wife" was eventually chosen for this occasion. Mr. George Romans produced the play and is greatly to be congratulated on the result, also for his splendid portrayal of that rustic character, "Churdles Ash." Three cheers for him, and others such, who labour so hard for the advancement of Drama in our villages.

For the first time in the history of the Society it was found necessary to give an extra performance to accommodate the people.

R. E. B.

NAILSEA SHAKESPEARE SOCIETY, SOMERSET.

For eight years the Nailsea Shakespeare Society has been striving to promote an interest in the works of Shakespeare in this little Somersetshire Village of some 4,000 inhabitants.

Each year the Society produces either scenes from one or two of his plays or else a whole play. Among those already performed are : "The Comedy of Errors," "Twelfth Night," "As You Like It," "The Taming of the Shrew," and "A Midsummer Night's Dream," and this year we have chosen "The Merry Wives of Windsor."

Although we are primarily Shakespearean players, we have ventured into the realms of modern comedy and "Lord Richard in the Pantry" proved a most amusing and successful venture.

Interest in the Society has spread to our neighbouring villages and we are frequently asked to visit them to give a performance on behalf of some local charity. Our membership is now forty-three and we are pleased to say that it manifests a tendency to increase yearly.

F. L. MATTHEWS,
Hon. Secretary.

THE NETTLECOMBE PLAYERS, SOMERSET.

Population, 200. Members, 20.

1932 has seen a distinct advance in our standard of acting. Last Spring we were awarded the banner for the one-act play in the Somerset W.I. Drama Festival and were ranked 4th out of the teams competing in this Division (Som., Wilts., and Glos.) of the National Festival of Community Drama.

At our Annual Meeting a talk on acting was given by Miss Joyce Corfield Cole of the Little Theatre, Bristol.

We have at last achieved a fixed stage and new curtains, the latter being paid for by the proceeds of an entertainment on December 9th, at which we had the assistance of "The Westbury Park Players," Bristol. They presented "Things that Matter," by Phoebe M. Rees (as performed by them in the finals at the Clifton Arts Club Play-Writing Contest). The performance was rendered memorable by the fine playing of the blind Captain by Stanley Gibbs.

This was followed by "Used Goods," a smuggling comedy by the same author, presented by The Nettlecombe Players.

P. M. REES, Producer.

NEW BARKBY W.I. PLAYERS, LEIC.

Rural District Syston. Population 3,000 odd. Membership of Society, 32.

In the early months of 1932 our members met every Tuesday evening, when our tutor, Mr. Harry Letts of Leicester, took rehearsals of Sladen-Smith's play "The Man Who wouldn't go to Heaven" and demonstrated through the acting members many useful points in stage technique.

We entered the above play in the R.C.C. Competition, but did not get into the finals this year.

In March we entered in the Eastern Area B.D.L. Festival, three plays : "The Man Who wouldn't go to Heaven," "Wayside War," by Margaret Napier, and "The Ebony Box," a dramatized version of A. E. W. Mason's short story by one of our members.

During the summer the Leicester Pageant occupied many of our members, and we were not able to produce an open-air play on our own account.

Our Autumn Season opened hopefully. Eight new members joining, and we had secured Miss Doreen O'Driscoll as our tutor for the Loughborough University Extension Classes, which our Society has had the good fortune to take for the last three years. We chose Martinez Sierra's "The Romantic Young Lady" for our first three-act play, commencing rehearsals in October and producing it on December 14th with a fair amount of artistic success. Our stage presentation and lighting effects met with general approbation, and the actors held the audience's interest throughout.

On December 3rd a number of our members availed themselves of the kind invitation of the Governors and Officials of Loughborough University to visit the College. Sir Barry Jackson gave a most interesting and instructive talk on the Malvern Festival in the afternoon. After tea we were conducted over the Engineering Workshops, etc., and entertained in the new Gymnasium by the Drama Society Students in a witty and enjoyable Revue.

We are entering two one-act plays in the R.C.C. Competition, also the B.D.L. Theatre Festival, and one of these in the Women's Institute Drama Festival, 1933.

Our Society is thriving, our members are enthusiastic and we look forward with hope to better achievements.

GLADYS T. HERINGTON, Hon. Secretary.

REPORTS FROM V.D.S. BRANCHES

NEWMILL AND TEVIOTHEAD S.W.R.I. ROXBURGHSHIRE.

Membership : round about 70.

The following are the names of plays which have been done : "Mary's Dismissal," "Best of Friends," "The Bride," and "Miscr of Rogafjord" Border Musical Festival at Hawick. Dramatized Song "Wraggle-Taggle Gypsies" at Roxburghshire Federation Rally at Kelso on 26th November, 1932. Got 1st prize at Rally with 158 points out of 180—93% for Drama. 65 out of 80 for Musical part.

B. E. GRIEVE, Hon. Secretary.

NORTHENDEN A.D.S., CHESHIRE

The above Society opened their season 1931-2 with a one-act Lancashire dialect play "Lonesome Like," by Brighouse ; then following the tactics of previous years, the first big production was a comedy called "The Unfair Sex." This was also played outside the village for two nights. The yearly contribution to the Literary Society's programme took the form of a reading of portions of Galsworthy's "The Mob" and "Skin Game." In November a Yorkshire dialect domestic comedy was essayed, "The Devil a Saint," by Gregson, this was afterwards taken to the Altringham Garrick Society, where it was very well received. On the principle that variety is the spice of life, the next choice was "Rutherford & Son," a play written around North Country life ; somewhat heavy in character. Then to round off an ambitious season, George Bernard Shaw's "Man and Superman" was played to packed houses, for three nights in March, 1932. Financially the season was the best ever experienced by the Society, although its difficulties had never been so great. At the height of the season, the hut for years had been ideal for the Society's Headquarters, was declared unsafe, and a fresh billet had to be looked for hurriedly. This was secured after much frantic searching, and the Society is now the proud possessor of a Headquarters achieved solely by the Society's workers, where experimental plays can be staged for their members.

ODIHAM GRAMMAR SCHOOL D.S., HANTS.

This year the Society has given four performances of a programme of three one-act plays, viz. : "The Ebb Tide," (Robert Lambert) ; "The Tale of a Royal Vest," (F. Roskruse) ; and "The House with the Twisty Windows," (Mary Pakington) in Hook, December 5th ; Fleet, December 6th, Odiham December 7th, and Hartley Wintney December 8th.

A set of "flats" representing the panelled walls of a saloon on a private yacht was constructed and painted by the School for "The Ebb Tide" and on the reverse of this was painted the setting of a disused cellar for "The House with the Twisty Windows" and a great many of the properties and articles of stage furniture were made in the School workshop, thus giving opportunity to boys not performing to put their craftsmanship to practical use and to exercise their ingenuity.

The stage-managing, scene-changing, general and lighting effects were all controlled and operated by the pupils themselves.

For the first time in its history the Society had the invaluable help of a string orchestra, composed chiefly of old pupils of the School.

Altogether a very successful week as a conclusion to three months willing co-operation and splendid team work.

J. C. T. MACKINTOSH.

OVER STOWEY PLAYERS, SOMERSET.

Over Stowey is a very scattered Somerset village, with a population of about 250. Our membership for season 1931-32 was 33. Acting members : males, 11 ; females, 14.

Plays performed at entertainments in our own and other villages, and at Bridgwater and Taunton, were :—"The Old Lady Shows Her Medals" by Sir J. Barrie ; "The Dear Departed," by Stanley Houghton ; "Crook's Christmas," by DuGarde Peach ; "Meeting at Zoyland," by Hilda Fitch.

Plays performed at Somerset Rural Community Council Competition Preliminary Round at Nether Stowey : "The Old Lady Shows Her Medals"—Team A. ; "Crook's Christmas"—Team B. Adjudicator, Miss Elizabeth Blake.

Team A. qualified for the Finals at Taunton, at which Mr. Edward Lewis adjudicated, and in the finals we were successful in obtaining the Premier Award—The County Challenge (Clark) Cup,—which we had also won the previous year with "The Dear Departed," both plays being produced by Mr. Gerald Alexander of the Knightstone Pavilion, Weston-Super-Mare, who was at the time a valued member of our Players.

Mrs. Eleanor Fitzgerald as our Mrs. Dowey ("The Old Lady Shows Her Medals") won the Bowles Trophy for the best individual performance.

Under the auspices of the Somerset Rural Community Council we had a series of four play-reading lectures, led by W. J. Wilkins, B.A., of Taunton School and these were much enjoyed and appreciated by our members.

MABEL COUSINS, Hon. Secretary.

PAINSWICK PLAYERS, GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

Group of about 20. Population of Painswick, 900.

The Painswick Players gave a delightful triple bill on February 25th, 1932—"The Builders," by Laurence Housman ; "The Fatal Rubber," by Maurice Baring ; and "Their Business in Great Waters," by Louis N. Parker. "The Builders" was also given at the Drama Festival in Cheltenham in April, and awarded a Gold Star by Mrs. Penelope Wheeler.

In August they gave "The Winter's Tale," (Act IV.) in the garden of Painswick, in a very charming setting under great trees, with folk dances, and delightful part singing.

THE PLOMESGATE D.S., SUFFOLK.

(Generally spoken of as The Plomesgate Players).

We have a membership of about eighteen, mostly inhabitants of the village of Campsea Ashe, which numbered 401 at the last census, but anyone living in the Plomesgate Division of the County is eligible for membership.

On May 6th we gave, at Framlingham, two performances of "Master," by Marjorie Long, a Suffolk play by a Suffolk author. On November 3rd we played "Grumpy," by Horace Hodges and T. Wigacy Percyval at Saxmundham and again on November 10th at Woodbridge. These were both produced by Mr. Brownwell who is now busy with a pantomime which will not be performed till the day after this report is due.

The Plomesgate Players have entered a team for the Festival of Community Drama to be held in Ipswich next month. The 1st Act of John Galsworthy's "The Silver Box" will be given.

GRACE CORY, Hon. Secretary.



SCENE FROM "A DAMSEL IN DISTRESS"
BY IAN HAY AND P. G. WODEHOUSE,
AS PERFORMED BY THE TEMPLE NEWSAM
PLAYERS.



SCENE FROM "THE MOCKBEGGAR"
BY SHEILA KAYE-SMITH AND JOHN
HAMPDEN, AS PRODUCED BY THE
KNEBWORTH PLAYERS.

REPORTS FROM V.D.S. BRANCHES

PLYMTREE WOMEN'S INSTITUTE, DEVON.

Plymtree Women's Institute was placed third in the Novice Class at the Drama Competition organised by the Devon Federation of Women's Institutes in Exeter. "Legend" was the play chosen by Plymtree.

At Uffculme, in the Group Drama Competition, Plymtree was third, giving "The Bakehouse."

The Institute numbers fifty members, while the population is 327.

At Uffculme, Plymtree also entered a smaller team in "Farewell to Miss Pinkerton," but this scene was not judged with the plays.

C. D. STURGE, *Producer.*

PONTELAND PLAYERS, NORTHUMBERLAND.

The Ponteland Players live in the village of Ponteland in the County of Northumberland and have a membership of 35. They, with their Producer and Assistant Producer meet every fortnight, either to rehearse or to read and criticise plays.

Several plays have been done during the last year's work including : "The Simple Sketch," very amusing. "Canvassing Votes," another comedy. We entered a novice class in the W.I. County Drama Competition in Newcastle, and chose for our play "The Miser of Rogefjord" for which the criticism was quite good and third place was gained.

Our Producer (Miss Langton) wrote a Pageant on Noble Women, it proved a very great success, the Costumes being most charming were hired from the V.D.S.

"The Slice of Life" was our next play written in North-Country dialect it is extremely amusing.

On Christmas Eve our members met at our President's and sang Carols this completed our year.

DAISY IONS,
Secretary.

POOLEY BRIDGE D.S., WESTMORLAND.

The village has 84 inhabitants, from whom we are able to get only three performers, the rest coming from outlying houses—often some miles distant.

We have eleven regular members but can impress amateurs if needed to fill up a cast.

We acted a selection from "A Pageant of Witnesses" in June, two performances a comedy, "The Poetaster" in August, and two one-act sketches—"The New Farm Hand" and "Polly put the Kettle on" in Penrith on October 14th. We have had no lectures nor classes, nor have we entered for a Drama competition which took place. Despite bad weather and distances the rehearsals are always punctually attended and there is a spirit of comradeship and mutual help which eases the producer's labours. The improvement in gesture and delivery is very encouraging.

E. E. CUMPSTON, *Producer.*

PULBOROUGH W.I., SUSSEX.

During 1932 the Dramatic Section of Pulborough W.I. have performed the following plays :—"Old Cup o' Tay," by Mrs. Clement Salaman, "Sarah sits in the Garden," an original outdoor play performed at a Garden Fete, and "Once upon a time" also an original play, performed in October for the N.F.W.I. Drama

Competition. The Producer attended the Drama School at Exeter last April.

M. DRURT, *Producer.*

REVELSTOKE CHURCH PLAYERS, DEVON.

Population of village, 446. Membership of Society, as many as I want to produce a show.

On January 28th and 29th, 1932 "Pilgrim's Progress" and Esme Fulton's "Nativity Play" were produced in Revelstoke Parish Church. The proceeds, about £20, being devoted to the Tower Restoration Fund. The cast numbered 50 and were all drawn from the Village. Three performances were given, and at the opening and closing of each, Prayers were said by local Clergy. On the 28th the Bishop of Exeter was present, and spoke between the plays from the stage and gave the congregation his blessing. On the afternoon of the 29th the Bishop of Plymouth conducted the Prayers. The stage was built up in the centre of the Church, and electric light was introduced for the occasion. The organ and violins were used for the incidental music.

LOUIS A. W. WOOLLCOMBE.

RIPPLE DRAMA LEAGUE, WORCESTERSHIRE.

Members of Committee, 11. Number of Players, 7. Plays acted : "The Colonel's Consent" and "Mr. Sampson," once at Ripple Village and once at Hasfield. There was an excellent critique of the Ripple performance in Burin's Worcester Journal. No lectures or classes have been arranged, as people are too busy to attend anything but the rehearsals themselves. The plays were produced by Mr. Taylor of Holly Green, whose careful handling of the players in alluring them to use their own initiative as much as possible, produced excellent results. He also was responsible for the making of a large amount of the scenery, helped out by set pieces bought from Samuel French. The dresses were made by members of the Committee and by the players themselves. Altogether, we consider that this new venture has, so far, justified itself, and we hope to go on from good to better. We have not yet been able to enter for any Drama Festival.

DANA GRAY, *President.*

RUSKINGTON W.I.D.S., KESTEVEN, LINCS.

The population of Ruskington is 1,200, but the membership of our Society is not very large, being only 18.

In March, 1932, we entered for the Drama Competition held by the Kesteven Federation of Women's Institutes. Our team performed the "Prize Pigeon," and gained second place being only one mark behind the winning team. We are hoping to compete in the Drama Competition again this year, and shall not be satisfied until we win the Shield. The Play was produced by our own members with a little friendly criticism from the village Schoolmaster.

During the Autumn two of our members and also the President attended a One-Day Drama Production School on Carlton Scoop and so we are hoping to benefit by their experience. We have also performed one or two minor sketches at our monthly meeting in order to gauge the acting capabilities of our members.

W. A. COCK,
Hon. Secretary.

REPORTS FROM V.D.S. BRANCHES

ST. IVES DRAMATIC SOCIETY, CORNWALL.

The Society presented "The Best People" in November, 1931, also the plays "The Storm" by John Drinkwater and "Colombe" by Reginald Arkell for the British Drama League Festival in March, 1932, which received very favourable comment from the judge. All these plays were produced by Mrs. Lydia V. Martin. Better arrangements have been made for storing the scenery, and plays have been read during the Winter months at intervals of about a fortnight between each. Since Christmas rehearsals have been held and it is hoped the play "Quinneys" will be produced on February 16th and 17th.

Population, approximately 7,000. Membership, 35.
ELEANOR HEARSON,
Hon. Secretary.

ST. ROGER'S FOLK, LITTLE BADDOW, ESSEX.

Population, over 500. 4 original members, 10 associates.

Local productions have been somewhat discouraged in Essex this year, as a large pageant was promoted, with the intention of bringing in players from all over the county. This intention was hardly fulfilled.

Two members of St. Roger's Folk wrote words and music for a production of "The Pied Piper," which was successfully performed as a Christmas holiday piece by a number of adults and children from the village. Scenery was painted and costumes were designed by a local artist. A repetition is being demanded.

St. Roger's Folk entered for the National Competition with "The Invisible Duke," took a high place in the county but were beaten by Bedford for the semi-final. The play was performed at various places, notably in Chelmsford, as part of a large exhibition of "all that was best in the county." The setting and properties received high praise and were all made in the village. Through events affecting members the annual outdoor play had to be abandoned.

A drama from "David Copperfield" has been adapted, and is being performed with success in various towns and villages. The company finds that the appeal of Dickens is general, especially perhaps to the high-brow and to working people, in fact the attitude to the novelist is so much one of living friendship that a correspondence has been carried on in a local paper as a result of the play.

Members and associates have given help by acting, producing plays and lecturing on drama in many parts of the county.

NANCY J. GREGORY NICHOLSON,
Business Manager.

THE SALCOMBE AMATEUR DRAMATIC SOCIETY, DEVONSHIRE.

Population, about 2,000. Membership about 25. Last April the Society produced a new play on "Aldwych" lines entitled "Sanderson's Wife." This was extremely well received. It might do for other amateurs, having only one, indoor, set and fourteen characters, six ladies, eight men.

At present they have a triple bill in rehearsal for next January, including a one-act play by the author of "Sanderson's Wife," "Shanghai," by W. Stuckes,

and the fifth act of "Cyrano de Bergerac," by kind permission of Colonel Robert Loraine. The last is their entry for next year's National Festival.

An experiment of four reading evenings is being tried, the best parts being given to members who have not had leading parts in the productions, with a view to discovering talent.

Another play is under consideration for after Easter, but has not been chosen yet.

C. H. MARKHAM (Capt.),
Producer.

SANDFORD ST. MARTIN PLAYERS, OXFORDSHIRE.

Population, 300. Membership, 12.

Two plays have been produced with very fair success and keen enjoyment: "Moggeridge's Cow" and "Safe Custody." We only started in October. The village is asking for more.

C. B. GREY COLLIER,
Hon. Secretary.

SCRUTON PLAYERS, YORKSHIRE.

During the past year the Scruton Players performed "The Ship Comes In" on two or three occasions. This little one-act play always goes down well. "The Tyrant" was also given and was much liked. "The Family Group" (for which the team won the Novices Cup in 1931) was revived and played three times. This is the most popular of any of the plays done by the Scruton Players.

The Team entered for the York Federation W.I. Drama Competitions with "The Village Jumble."

There are eight W.I. Members, and two or three men who can be relied upon to help. The population of Scruton Village is about 280. This is a young team only in its second year.

E. WADLING,
Hon. Sec., Drama Sub-Committee.

SHAW-CUM-DONNINGTON WOMEN'S INSTITUTE, BERKS.

Membership of Institute, 65. Acting Team, about 15. We entered "Nothing but His Due" for the County W.I. Drama Competition and were placed first in the Newbury Area.

We produced two Tableaux in a series of the Life of Jack of Newbury in aid of Newbury Parish Church roof.

In December we entered a team of ten in "Joan the Maid," by Hermon Ould, for the National Federation of Women's Institutes Competition. The Bucklebury Manor Theatre, a converted barn, proved an ideal setting. The play suffered somewhat from the absence of men actors, but was played with simplicity and sincerity and was chosen to compete in Reading in March, when Mrs. Penelope Wheeler will judge.

We are also entering for the British Drama League Festival, Newbury area, to help provide the necessary number of teams.

HELEN ROBINSON,
Producer.

REPORTS FROM V.D.S. BRANCHES

THE SHIPLAKE A.D.S., (OXON.)

The Shiplake Amateur Dramatic Society was formed in March, 1932, with twenty acting members. The first production was a pot pourri consisting of three one-act plays, viz.: "Have you Anything to Declare?", "The Eighth Wonder" and "Dumb Jewels," the programme opening with two cameo sketches. During the year entertainments on a similar line were given for local organisations.

The Society has not yet been able to enter for any Festivals. Having successfully negotiated the initial difficulties, the Society is producing a three-act play next March. Although the Village Hall is over a mile from most of the member's homes, so enthusiastic are they, that it is a rarity to have an absentee at rehearsals. A number of the items given are written by members.

MARY STEWART,
Hon. Secretary.

THE SINGLETON PLAYERS, LANCASHIRE.

Population, about 350. Membership, 16. We did three plays in April: "Double Demon," "Becky Sharp," and "The Bride," and two in December, "The Monkey's Paw," and "The Simple Sketch." "Double Demon" I think was the most popular with the audience, though unpopular with the caste. "The Monkey's Paw" was the most interesting to produce and on the whole the best acted, but was spoilt by about four girls in the audience who giggled most of the time, much to the annoyance of the rest.

Should one choose plays chiefly with a view to the players or the audience? "Becky Sharp" was a great favourite with both.

M. A. WATSON,
Producer.

SISSINGHURST W.I. SHAKESPEARE SOCIETY KENT (WEST).

Population, just over 1,000. Membership of W.I., 70.

This year we have been producing "Twelfth Night." All the dresses were made in the village, and we acted the play in the grounds of Sissinghurst Place (by kind permission of General and Mrs. Drummond) last June. Since then we have done a scene for an entertainment got up on behalf of the Girl Guides, and we have entered for the W.I. Drama Festival to be held next year (1933). Early in the year some of our members joined a Dramatic Class held by Mrs. Streatfield at Cranbrook. Our Producer for "Twelfth Night" was M. Wigham Richardson, Esq., well-known in connection with Shakespeare Societies.

MINNIE H. HUGHES,
President and Drama Representative, Sissinghurst W.I.

SONNING VILLAGE PLAYERS, BERKS.

The Sonning Village Players held their initial meeting on the 10th October, when a sketch, "Hot Air," written by Mrs. Reid-Jamieson, was performed, followed by four improvised three-minute plays on "Television" and "Mistaken Identity." On November 7th "A Woman's Honour," by Susan Glaspell was performed

(at the second monthly meeting). This was followed by a talk given by Mr. Farquharson on "Characterisation in Acting."

Rehearsals of "Thirty Minutes in the Street," by Beatrice Mayor, were begun on November 11th, and the play was performed by the Society at the Reading Festival on December 14th. It was placed second by Mr. Lewis, first place and the Rovers Cup going to the Reading Repertory Company.

On January 16th, "Riders to the Sea," by J. M. Synge will be performed, (see page 96) and it is hoped to produce an original play with a local historical interest for the February meeting.

Three performances of a three-act play is contemplated for April which Mr. Robert Newton is being asked to produce.

The Sonning Village Players has a membership of a hundred. Their subscription is a nominal one of one shilling per annum, associate members paying half-a-crown.

The Society is forming a library of plays and inaugurating a scheme of play reading, to be carried on throughout the year, whereby dramatic works will be circulated between members who will read them and make a note of their impressions. It will be possible in this way to read a very large number of plays and to collect the views of the members upon them. This will not only facilitate the choice of works for Festival and Local Performance but should be of value to the individual members who participate in the scheme.

M. F. GOWRING,
Hon. Secretary.

SOUTH BADDESLEY CHORAL AND DRAMATIC SOCIETY, HAMPSHIRE.

Population of Village, 445. Membership of Society, (1932), 32.

We have given two short plays, "The Green Monkey" and "Charity Begins at Home," also an original Pantomime, "Back to the Nursery," written and produced by my husband (the Rev. R. L. Hodgson), and myself.

We entered for the W.I. County Drama Competition with a scene from "The Taming of the Shrew, (Act 1., Sc. 3.) but failed to get to Winchester.

The Pantomime included vocal solos—part songs and solo dances—and was a great success.

THE SOUTHCHURCH PLAYERS, ESSEX.

The chief feature of our dramatic work last year was the production on August Bank Holiday of "The Happy Man," a sketch by M. E. F. Irwin. It was staged quite simply, but gay costumes and suggestions of scenery helped to make it a great success, and it was thoroughly enjoyed by both audience and players.

We had hoped to produce at Christmas a Nativity Play, and, if possible, to do it in the Church, but we have had to give up thoughts of it for a time, owing to the death of our President, the Rector of Southchurch.

The membership and enthusiasm of the Branch is noticeably increasing, and we hope this year to make new ventures with more ambitious work.

p.p. M. HUNT,
D. STOCKDALE.

REPORTS FROM V.D.S. BRANCHES

SOUTH NUTFIELD W.I.D.S., SURREY.

Dramatic Section, 20 members.

The Dramatic Section took part in the Surrey County Competition for Women's Institutes and in the Class for Greek Plays, obtained first place, performing a cut version of "Medea."

In June at the W.I. Gymkhana, they staged a Tableau representing "Home and Country and the British Empire."

In July, two Hans Sachs' plays—"The Wandering Scholar" and "Dame Truth" were arranged for a Garden performance, but owing to inclement weather they were given indoors. A new play by Veer Arlett, "Making it Pay," was performed on the same afternoon, and it proved a very successful programme.

At W.I. Meetings two other short plays "Sand" and "Theatre Queue," both by Horace Sequiera, have been given; and on December 29th three of the above plays were performed at the East Surrey Hospital, Redhill, for the patients—"Sand," "Theatre Queue" and "Making it Pay" being chosen, as they are all amusing and light.

A. RAWLINGS,
Hon. Secretary.

STORRINGTON V.D.S., SUSSEX.

We have not been able to attend any Schools, nor did we have Hon. Mary Pakington this year, but we have given three performances of "Poached Eggs & Pearls" and three of "The Poacher." We entered for the Sussex Drama Festival at Steyning but were not successful in passing to the finals. We have also helped the Storrington Women's Institute, and four members helped with dialogues and monologues at the Storrington Mothers' Union. We have now a membership of forty, and this includes from twelve to fourteen acting members. We hope to start a play soon. Also Mr. Welch who is our Producer has been busy making extra scenery for our branch and has worked very hard for us.

Alice Clifford.

STOWTING PLAYERS, (KENT).

Four Performances of "Henry IV" pt. 1 were given last Spring. A British Drama League critic, Mr. John Bourne, wrote a criticism for the "Kent Messenger," from which the following extracts are taken:

"This play was given by an all-women cast. After seeing over 150 amateur efforts during the last 18 months, this production represented the most remarkable of them all."

"For several reasons it was true Community Drama. The play is difficult—and when it is remembered that Sir John Falstaff is a prominent character in the play—at first thought an impossible part for a woman to perform—it will be realised that none but an enthusiast would have dared to embark on such a production."

"Yet the play got very near to real Shakespeare, the William Shakespeare of Stratford-on-Avon, and not the dramatist whom elocutionists and arty Londoners camouflage."

The Players are now rehearsing "Antony and Cleopatra." The population is 190.

B. M. JENKIN,
Producer.

STROMNESS A.D.S., ORKNEY.

Population, 1650. Membership, 40.

This Society produced during 1932 the "Cheerful Knave" and ran the play on four consecutive evenings with great success.

"Better than ever," was the unanimous verdict of crowded houses. The Producer (Dr. Cromarty), was again successful in his selection of players; the staging effects enhanced good acting, and even the "off" were always timely and effective. The Society has established in three years, a reputation for sound work, and has in hand a modern play. While the Society could not enter this year's Drama Festival, it is hoped that it will do so next season. The Society remains in a healthy condition.

G. S. ROBERTSON,
Hon. Secretary.

SUTTON AT HONE COMMUNITY COUNCIL, KENT.

Population, about 2,000.

In connection with the above three short plays, entitled "Burglars," "Blackmailers All," and "On the Moor" were given in the Village Hall, Sutton at Hone, and met with a very good reception.

TEMPLE EWELL PLAYERS KENT.

Population, about 900. Membership, 29.

The Temple Ewell Players have had a successful year. We can count a small increase in membership and a greater increase in enthusiasm.

We gave two performances in the past year—In March "As You Like It" was played, with simple scenery Curtains, traverse and others of pale fawn colour, with a little greenery and a rustic bench for the forest scenes. In December two performances of Van Dyke's "The Other Wise Man" and "The Christmas Carol" adapted from Dicken's story was given. These performances had a very encouraging reception. The Players were most enthusiastic and combined in a great effort to make the plays as impressive as possible.

MARGARET JOHNSON,
Producer.

TEMPLNEWSAM PLAYERS, COLTON, NEAR LEEDS.

Population of village, 250. Membership of Society, about 40.

Our plays are given in the Parochial Hall, Halton. Last year we gave "Neighbourly Love," "A Dose of Physic" and "Privy Council," and took the same three to York Drama Competitions (W.I.). "Privy Council" was highly commended by Miss Gwen Lally (adjudicator). Just missed getting the Cup with "A Dose of Physic." "Choice of Play" was the point on which we lost, although the York Committee asked us to do it. For our local Nursing Association here we gave "Captain Cook," "Simple Sketch" and "Master of the House." Financial result £12 10 0 to the funds of the Nursing Association. In November we gave "Damsel in Distress." This was voted a huge success.

REPORTS FROM V.D.S. BRANCHES

The play gives scope for a large cast, and plenty of supernumeraries to have a chance, if only to walk on and off the stage. Part of the proceeds (£7 7 0 to be exact), went to Leeds General Infirmary.

Our Coach and Producer is Madame Ernest Parker, who is one of our W.I. Members.

(Mrs.) F. JENKIN,
Hon. Secretary.

TIDEBROOK & BEECH HILL W.I., SUSSEX.

Membership, about 80.

The only play produced this year was "The Simple Sketch," by Miss Mary Kelly, which was presented by members of the above W.I. at their Annual Concert on April 30th. Although the Institute had entered for the East Sussex Drama Festival in 1931, it was not found possible to do so this year.

Neither classes nor lectures have been arranged this year.

F. E. BEVAN,
Vice-President & Secretary
to the Drama Entertainment Committee.

ULEY VILLAGE PLAYERS.

This band of some twenty players—mostly men,—living in a small Cotswold village, have done a year of good steady work again. At the Cheltenham Drama Festival they acted two scenes from Coriolanus being awarded a (gold star) certificate, their home-made armour and dresses being much praised.

During the Summer they gave performances of "She Stoops to Conquer," and "St. Patrick's Day" in aid of local charities.

In September at their first meeting to decide on the Winter's work, the Players were unanimous in choosing to try another of Shakespeare's tragedies. They are now working very hard at "Othello" which they hope to produce in the Spring. All the scenery and dresses for this play are being made by the Players.

A. H. PHILLIPS,
Producer.

UPWEY AND BROADWEY W.I. PLAYERS (DORSET).

Population of the two villages, 2,016. No. of Players, 18 to 20, one-third being men.

In the Spring two performances of "The Door of Chain" were given, one being in connection with Dorset Federation Women's Institutes Drama Festival, a 2nd Class Certificate being obtained.

A Burlesque (home made) of the old-fashioned "Penny Reading" was given with very great success.

In the Summer, a home-made playlet of local history was performed at a W.I. open-air fete, and again at a garden meeting. This was much liked. It consisted of two scenes, folk-dances and songs in keeping with the little drama greatly aided the effect.

Winter. Two one-act plays were very successfully performed—"The Miser of Rogafjord" and "First Aid."

In the beginning of the year, a Dramatic Class was formed. Four meetings were held. It was hoped by this means to give every Institute Member who wished to do so an opportunity of taking part in dramatic work.

CONSTANCE FERGUSON,
Producer.

THE WARLINGHAM D.S., SURREY.

Membership, 30.

Last April we gave three performances of "The Damsel in Distress." It was a success both financially and otherwise.

This December we chose a different type of play, "The Last of Mrs. Cheyney," by Lonsdale. The Dramatic Critic said, "That this difficult play was excellently performed and the players achieved a distinct success, showing ability, imagination and promise.

The scenery was made by the stage-manager, H. Underhill, who was also responsible for the lighting, a particularly effective piece of work was the silhouette picture created in the bedroom scene.

Messrs. Hampton & Son very kindly lent us the furniture for this play and Mrs. Cheyney and Mrs. Ebley made their own dresses.

We have entered the 1st Act of this play for the Festival.

DOROTHY HENDERSON,
Producer.

WELFORD-ON-AVON A.D.S., WARWICKSHIRE.

The population of our village is about 600, our membership 17.

We are extremely fortunate in having such an able and enthusiastic producer in "Alva Wood," of Birmingham.

The year 1932 has not been a very successful one with us owing to illness at its beginning. Soon after we began rehearsals of the comedy "Zack," by Harold Brighouse, our producer became indisposed. However, "Gordon Bailey" offered his services which we accepted and greatly appreciated. Unfortunately several members of the cast failed in health and the play had to be abandoned.

When beginning again in October for the winter months, we decided on three one-act plays, namely, "A Night at an Inn," by Lord Dunsany, "Op-o'-me-Thumb," by Frederick Ferin, and Richard Pryce, and "A Grand Cham's Diamond," by Allan Monkhouse. Two performances of the above were given and although we had a good attendance at each performance the expenses were not defrayed, owing to the Royalties, which no doubt are a great drawback to many other small villages.

WEST CLANDON D.S., SURREY.

Population of village, 500 (about). Membership of Society, 20.

In February the Society gave a performance of three little plays—"A Village Jumble" (Banisdale), "The Area Belle" (Brough), and "The Hordle Poacher" (Bernard Gilbert).

The Company worked hard and the result was very greatly appreciated by a crowded audience. As it was not possible to have possession of the stage till late the night before the performance and consequently there could be no rehearsal with the scene set, the difficulties in the way of the actors can be realised, but they surmounted all these admirably.

No lectures have been held, but the Society has entered for the County Competition arranged by Mrs. Whitworth, and at the time of writing are busily preparing for this.

MARGARET N. BEATTY, Producer.

REPORTS FROM V.D.S. BRANCHES

WEST END, ST. JAMES' D.S., HAMPSHIRE.

Population, about 1,600. Membership of Society, 21. We produced three short plays on April 13th in the Parish Hall, repeating them at the Mental Institute. They were "Earwigs," by Peel, "The Question" by Wareing, and "Is He Married?" by Barnes. These plays absorbed most of the company, and went with spirit, the team-work being better than usual. The fact that we had three good leading ladies caused some comment. On October 19th, we gave two plays, "The Last Straw" by Elrington, and "The Man on the Sofa" by Maple; these also were repeated at the Mental Institute, several of the principal parts being taken by understudies in a very creditable manner. Mention should be made of the well-sustained and excellent broken English of the butler in the latter play. Circumstances prevented the holding of Classes arranged for the summer, and the company are unable to undertake Drama Festivals at present.

L. FRANCES ACTON,
Hon. Producer.

WHALLEY PLAYERS, LANCASHIRE.

Population, 1,400. Membership, 32. The Whalley Players were formed in October, 1931, and produced "Hawleys of the High Street" in the theatre of the Calderstone Institution in March, 1932. The play was given to the public on two nights and although it was the first attempt in a big production for the majority of the cast, an exceedingly good show was given under the coaching of Mrs. P. Tennant-Smith of Accrington. The cast had the advantage of a good stage and the staging effects, upon which a great deal of the success of the play depends, were excellently carried out under the direction of the President, Miss Dorothy M. Taylor. The building, which seats about 800, was full on both nights and the audience showed their appreciation in no uncertain manner. The society is producing "A Damsel in Distress" in March, 1933.

E. CHUTCHELL,
Hon. Secretary.

WHITECRAIGS COMEDY CLUB, RENFREWSHIRE.

Population of district about one thousand. Membership of Club, 50.

This flourishing Society is just about to present a performance of one-act plays for the sixth consecutive year, in the local Tennis Pavilion which has been adapted to enable a very up-to-date small theatre be fixed up therein on very short notice. Although a miniature, in that 3-act plays are practically impossible therein, the standard of production is very high and the stage setting and lighting are on a par, if not better, than many professional equipments.

The first year, Pinero's "Playgoers" and Milne's "Gentleman in the Bowler Hat" were put on; next, "The Guinea Stamp" by Stewart Black, a sketch "The Old Lady shows Her Muddles," and "Evening Dress Indispensable" followed, in the third year, by "The Treasure Hunt," "Nerves" and "The Bathroom Door." Next we put on "A War Committee" by Edmund Knoblock, "The Ghost of Jerry Bundler," and "The Wooin' O'it," by W. D. Cocker. Last year we produced "Glensheight," by Joe Corrie, "Dolly's Week-end"

and "The Night Before," for the first time on any stage, and by one of our members, Mr. W. R. McIntosh—an excellent play. This year we do "World without Men," by Philip Johnson, "Thread o' Scarlet," by J. J. Bell, and "The Pensioner," by A. D. Cowan. We have not yet entered for any Drama Festivals.

JAS. A. ANDERSON,
Business Manager.

WHITTINGTON PLAYERS, (SALOP).

The Whittington Players have a membership of 15. The population of Whittington is roughly 1,000, and it is in the County of Shropshire.

We were to have produced a farce, entitled "The Wrong plumber" by Harvey O'Higgins and Harriet Ford in January, but owing to one of our chief actresses having fractured a limb, and it being impossible for anyone to take her place, we were obliged to postpone this.

We are entering the Shropshire Drama Festival held at Shrewsbury in February, when Mr. Sladen-Smith will again adjudicate. The play we are rehearsing for this is entitled "The Actress," by Vernon Sylvaine.

G. M. KENT,
Hon. Secretary.

WOLDINGHAM PLAYERS, SURREY.

In a community of about 700 people, the Woldingham Players number 100 members, of whom 55 take an active part. Our chief difficulty is that there is only one hall in Woldingham, and that not equipped with a permanent stage. Only those who have experienced similar conditions can understand what an immense amount of labour, and expense and difficulty is entailed by having to erect and dismantle the entire stage with all its fittings and lighting, and transporting the whole outfit from half-a-mile away before and after each production. Rehearsals also have to be held in private houses as the hall is so much in demand.

We have however, produced 13 plays, giving two performances of each, and are now preparing to make our first entry into the Festival of Community Drama.

WOLSINGHAM AMATEUR DRAMATIC SOCIETY, CO. DURHAM.

Wolsingham, a small country town in the N.West of Durham with a population of about two thousand, has a Dramatic Society consisting of 17 men and 19 women, each of whom is keenly interested in Dramatic work. The Society has produced, during the year 1932, "Between the Soup and the Savoury," with which a team competed against eleven teams at the Newcastle Festival and won the sixth place. A performance of "The Fourth Wall" which was given early in the year was a remarkable success in spite of the fact that it was the Society's first attempt at serious drama. A fortnight before Xmas the members gave their own adaption of Dickens's "Christmas Carol" which was so much appreciated that they have been asked to repeat the performance at Stanhope—a village five miles away, on December 30th.

Eight members have been attending an Evening Class in "Dramatic Art" under Dr. Fisher of Bishop Auckland, and two members attended the Bensham Settlement School of Dramatic Art in September.

REPORTS FROM V.D.S. BRANCHES

THE WOODFORD GREEN (ESSEX), WOMEN'S INSTITUTE DRAMA SECTION.

The Woodford Green (Essex), Women's Institute Drama Section has 30 members out of an Institute Membership of 160. Membership has been limited owing to lack of accommodation, but this year it is proposed to hold two Play Reading Circles to accommodate all who wish to join.

Owing to a change of Producers, we did not take part in the W.I. Drama Competition last year, but we hope to enter in April this year.

Plays read : "King John," Shakespeare ; "The Apple Cart," Shaw ; "Justice," Galsworthy ; "The Taming of the Shrew," Shakespeare ; "The Barretts of Wimpole Street," Rudolf Beserier ; "Julius Caesar" Shakespeare ; "The Admirable Crichton," Barrie.

Plays Produced : Scene from "Bleak House," Dickens ; "The Rose and the Ring," Thackeray (adapted by producer) ; "The Hero," Original play by a member's husband.

JEAN SNAPE,
Producer

YEALAND VILLAGE PLAYERS, LANCASHIRE.

Population, about 400 in the 3 Yealand villages.
Membership, about 35.

Last Easter we produced a Variety Evening, which included two dramatic turns. One was F. Austin Hyde's dialect comedy "First Aid," very amusing and popular with the audience. The second was a revival of the traditional Pace-Egg mumming play, which used to be acted by boys and men from house to house at Easter time. Colonel O. H. Norton collected versions from many of the older folk, and compiled a complete play as acted in these parts 50 years ago. The traditional costumes proved very effective, and the Colonel himself took the part of the Doctor.

In December we gave two plays : "Miss in her Teens," by Garrick, a light, Georgian comedy, and "Doctor 'My Book'" by Alicia Ramsey and Rudolf de Cordova. This last play is as yet unpublished but has been twice given on the Radio, and the authors allowed us to act it and helped us with suggestions. It was one of the best things the Yealand Players have done, and is to be repeated in Lancaster in January at the invitation of the Rural Adult Education Department.

ELIZABETH BROCKBANK, R.M.S., Producer.

PERSONAL SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS

Received through the Village Drama Section from 14th Jan., 1932, to 14th Jan., 1933.

Assheton, Mrs.	1	1	0	Knox, Mrs. R.	10	6
Atkinson, Mrs.	10	6		Leathart, Mrs. (2 years)	1	0
Beatty, Mrs.	5	0		Lee, Mrs.	5	0
Bellamy, Mrs.	10	6		Lethbridge, Mrs.	10	0
Bickersteth, Rev. H. L.	10	6		Lovett Turner, Mrs.	5	0
Bond, Mrs.	5	0		Mapleton, Miss	10	6
Bosanquet, Mrs.	10	6		Morris, T. B., Esq.	5	0
Bottomley, Dr. Gordon	2	2	0	Morgan, Professor A. E.	10	6
Britton, Miss C.	10	6		Nicholson, Mrs. Gregory	10	6
Brooks, Miss A.	10	6		Noel Buxton, The Lady (2 years)	4	4
Carey, Miss E.	5	0		Pakington, The Hon. Mary	10	6
Chamberlain, Miss C.	5	0		Plymouth, The Rt. Rev. the Lord Bishop of	10	6
Clark, Mr. & Mrs. J. B.	1	1	0	Proctor, Miss J.	10	6
Clinton, The Lady	10	6		Radcliffe, Mrs. F. C.	1	1
Coode, Mrs. (2 years)	1	1	0	Radford, Miss Cecily	10	6
Coryton, Miss	10	6		Robson, Mrs.	10	6
Cropper, Miss	10	6		Rogers, Mrs.	1	0
Dove, Miss	5	0		Scrutton, The Rt. Hon. Lord Justice	10	0
Edwards, Mrs.	10	6		Scrutton, Mrs. J. H.	1	0
Fryer, Miss (2 years)	1	1	0	Secretan, Mrs.	10	6
Fuller-Maitland, J. A., Esq.	1	1	0	Smith, Mrs. Ronald	5	0
Glasscock, Mrs.	10	6		Sorensen, Mrs.	10	6
Godwin, Miss	5	0		Sperling, Mrs.	1	0
Grievson, Miss	5	0		Verrall, Miss T.	10	6
Gullan, Miss	10	6		Wheeler, Mrs. Penelope	10	6
Harris-St. John, Mrs. (2 years)	10	0		Whyte, Miss Elsie	10	6
Henderson, Mrs.	10	6		Whyte, Miss Evelyn	10	6
Hoyle, Mrs.	10	0		Wilson, Miss A. M.	1	0
Hyde, F. A., Esq.	10	6		Worsley, Miss A.	10	6
Ince, Mrs.	5	0				
Jackson, Sir Barry....	10	6				
Jenkinson, Miss	10	6				
Kelly, A. M., Esq.	1	0	0			
Kelly, Miss D.	1	0	0			

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NEWS FROM NORTH AND SOUTH

THE HOLYWELL PLAYERS.

The Holywell Players, who won the Cedric Hardwicke Trophy in the 1932 Festival, and were the moving spirit in The Four Winds Repertory Theatre, propose to run a series of Plays each Tuesday and Wednesday from February 7th at the Ballet Club Theatre, 2a, Ladbroke Road, W.11. (close to Notting Hill Gate Tube Station). Each Play will be given four times.

The programme is interesting and unusual. At 8.30 on the 7th February Mr. Clifford Bax's translation of Goldoni's Comedy "The Impressario from Smyrna" will be produced by Mr. John Fernald. There will follow "The Evil Doers of Good" (Benavente), "Androcles and the Lion" (Shaw), "S.S. Tenacity" (Vildrac), and "The Confederacy" (Vanbrugh). The last will be produced by Miss Dorothy Green. Costumes and scenery will, as hitherto, be under the general care of Mr. Gower Parks.

"The Impressario from Smyrna" is the most amusing of Goldoni's Plays. It deals with the adventures of an elderly Turk who wishes to start Opera in Smyrna and sets about engaging a company in Venice. Although first produced at Carnival time in 1761 the Play provides a pleasant satire on the manners of the theatre in these days as well as those.

All particulars of the Season and of the Holywell Playgoers' Association (subscription 1s.) formed to support it, may be had of the Assistant Secretary, 20, Kensington Mansions, S.W.5. (Frobisher 2804).

EDINBURGH REPERTORY THEATRE.

"Robert Burns," the three-act published play by Mrs. Fletcher-Lee, was presented by the Edinburgh Repertory Theatre Company with conspicuous success, on Monday, December 19th for a week's run. Doubtless the large cast has proved an obstacle to earlier presentation of this interesting and moving play. Doubling, however, was most successfully carried out by the Producer, Mr. George Davies, in two strong roles; by Miss Margaret Adams, effective alike as the Poet's Mother and as the Duchess of Gordon; and by several of the other players. Miss Greta Collens gave a most sympathetic rendering of Jean Armour, who becomes the Poet's wife, as did Miss Leebie Channon of the charming Mrs. Riddell. But the Poet himself is the keystone of the drama and he is finely played by Mr. Rex de la Haye who brings sympathy and understanding and charm to the part—as well as the requisite appearance. A notable Production. The Edinburgh Repertory Theatre Company will, by arrangement with Messrs. Harold Wyndham, give further performances of "Robert Burns" at the Lyceum Theatre early in March.

SONNING VILLAGE PLAYERS.

This production of "Riders to the Sea" was an experiment for the society. An architectural set, which was completely non-representational was used although the scene is laid in a cottage kitchen on the west coast of Ireland.

The stage was draped in black curtains, except for a small gap in the centre, where a plain back-cloth was set, about three feet back. The set itself was made of

three sets of steps and rostrums, two three-ply wood chests, an old kitchen table, and cardboard, and was painted a neutral grey. Two fishing nets, formally draped, one on each side of the stage, and a curved piece of black cardboard across the bottom of the opening helped to create an atmosphere of the sea (so predominant in this play), while another piece of cardboard in the shape of a beam was hung across the top left-hand corner conveying the cottage interior.

The lighting was very simple. In the centre of the fore-stage a small red flood was placed, which lit up the steps and also gave the effect of a cottage hearth. The back-cloth was lit a sea green by three floods, two above and one below. The fishing nets were faintly silhouetted by red lamps which hung behind them.

The play was produced by Mr. Eric Capon and the set designed by Mr. Kenneth Capon.

PLYMOUTH.

Although the Tamaritans are one of the youngest of Plymouth's amateur dramatic societies, they are not the least ambitious. During December, at the little Globe Theatre which is the hub of amateur theatrical work in the city, they presented a quadruple bill including Shaw's "Dark Lady of the Sonnets" and A. P. Herbert's "Two Gentlemen of Soho."

A. P. H.'s Shakespearean burlesque, with its mock-heroics and its final pile of corpses, was delightfully done, and staged most artistically in black-and-white. Frank Hughes, as the very matter-of-fact Plum, Cecil Bagnall as Lord Withers, and Joyce Wilford as Topsy, carried off the acting honours, and Frederick W. Rowe produced the piece with distinct skill.

"The Dark Lady" provided the best individual performance of the evening. Thomas Frame had just the right touch for Shakespeare, who strips up so many unconsidered trifles on a balcony in Whitehall one summer evening, and E. Aitken-Davies produced with care.

Cecil Bagnall and Frank Hughes got a lot of the rather forced humours of "The Touch of Truth," and a farcical playlet by Vernon Sylvaine completed the bill.

The Tamaritans' next venture will probably be Noel Coward's "The Young Idea," produced by Frederick Rowe.

BROADCAST TALKS ON THE DRAMA.

"The Making of a Play" is the title of a course of six Broadcast Talks of special interest to our members and affiliated Societies, which will take place on consecutive Tuesday evenings at 7.30, beginning on March 2nd next. A single play, Shakespeare's "Macbeth," will be taken as the focus point for the various subjects treated, which will include the Art of Playwriting, the Play from the Producer's point of view, from the Actors' point of view and from the Artist-designer's point of view. Mr. Geoffrey Whitworth will open the Series with a general introduction, and it will conclude with a Talk on a Village production of "Macbeth" by Dr. L. du Garde Peach. Other speakers will be Mr. Harcourt Williams, Mr. John Gielgud and Mr. Albert Rutherford. It is suggested that discussion groups might well be formed to listen in to these Talks and to debate them afterwards.

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